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RISE AND FALL

OF THE

SLAVE POWER IN AMERICA.





HISTORY  
OF  
THE RISE AND FALL OF  
THE SLAVE POWER  
IN AMERICA

BY  
HENRY WILSON

VOL. I.



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## PREFACE.

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FROM the closing months of 1860 to the spring of 1865, the United States presented to the gaze of mankind a saddening and humiliating spectacle. Treasonable menaces had ripened into treasonable deeds. A rebellion of gigantic proportions burst upon the nation with suddenness and fierceness. Violence held its carnival and reaped its bloody harvest. Millions of treasure and hundreds of thousands of lives were sacrificed on the wasting shrine of civil war.

During that stern conflict, and since its close, thoughtful men have asked why this Christian nation, with so many ties to bind it together, and with such momentous interests to be imperilled, was rent and dissevered by fraternal strife. Why was the soil of republican America reddened with the blood of husbands and fathers, sons and brothers, and bathed with the tears of wives and mothers, daughters and sisters?

In the lights of the present, it is now more clearly seen that the dark spirit of slavery was the inspiration of these crimes against the peace, the unity, and the life of the nation, and that these sacrifices of property, of health, and of life were the inflictions of the Slave Power in its maddened efforts to make perpetual its hateful dominion. These bitter fruits of the seeds sown in colonial times afford another signal illustration of the truth of the inspired declaration that "righteousness exalteth a nation, and sin is a reproach to any people."

I propose to write a history of the beginning and growth, the expansion and extinction, of slavery; also of the development and extirpation of the Slave Power. This work will be comprised in three volumes of some one hundred and thirty chapters, and about two thousand pages. The first and second volumes will trace slavery and portray its influences from its introduction in 1619 to the opening of the civil war. The third volume will describe that series of measures by which slavery was extinguished and the Slave Power broken, the Union reconstructed on the basis of freedom, and citizenship, with civil and political rights, assured to all. The second volume will be published next year, and the third in the year following.

I have striven with scrupulous fidelity to truth and justice to narrate the facts, develop the principles, and portray the results of this "irrepressible conflict" between the antagonistic forces of freedom and slavery. Although I have borne, for more than thirty years, an humble part in this stern strife, and have been personally acquainted with many of the actors and their doings, I have endeavored to be as impartial as the lot of humanity will permit. Of the actors in the great drama I have not set down aught in malice. Of the living and of the dead I have written as though I were to meet them in the presence of Him whose judgments are ever sure.

To my countrymen I commit this work, on which I have bestowed years of unstinted labor, in the confident hope that it will contribute something to a clearer comprehension of the career of that Power, which, after aggressive warfare of more than two generations upon the vital and animating spirit of republican institutions, upon the cherished and hallowed sentiments of a Christian people, upon the enduring interests and lasting renown of the Republic, organized treasonable conspiracies, raised the standard of revolution, and plunged



the nation into a bloody contest for the preservation of its threatened life. I trust that this record will reveal to those who raised voice and hand against their country the true nature and real character of that system they sought to perpetuate at such fearful cost; and to those who were loyal to country and liberty, the magnitude and grandeur of the cause in which they exhibited such faith and devotion, endurance and heroism. I trust, too, that the young men who remember the days of their boyhood, when homes were saddened by the absence of fathers, brothers, and kindred, summoned to encounter the hazards and hardships of the camp and field, will gather something from these pages which will enable them to realize in larger measure the toils and sacrifices offered for the redemption of their country and its free institutions, of which they, under Providence, are so soon to become the guardians.

HENRY WILSON.

February 16, 1872.





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# RISE AND FALL OF THE SLAVE POWER IN AMERICA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE BEGINNINGS AND GROWTH OF SLAVERY AND THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE SLAVE POWER.

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God's Holy Word declares that man was doomed to eat his bread in the sweat of his face. History and tradition teach that the indolent, the crafty, and the strong, unmindful of human rights, have ever sought to evade this Divine decree by filching their bread from the constrained and unpaid toil of others. From inborn indolence, conjoined with avarice, pride, and lust of power, has sprung slavery in all its Protean forms, from the mildest type of servitude to the harsh and hopeless condition of absolute and hereditary bondage. Thus have grown and flourished caste and privilege, those deadly foes of the rights and well-being of mankind, which can exist only by despoiling the many for the benefit of the few.

American slavery reduced man, created in the Divine image, to property. It converted a being endowed with conscience, reason, affections, sympathies, and hopes, into a chattel. It sunk a free moral agent, with rational attributes and immortal

aspirations, to merchandise. It made him a beast of burden in the field of toil, an outcast in social life, a cipher in the courts of law, and a pariah in the house of God. To claim himself, or to use himself for his own benefit or the benefit of wife or child, was deemed a crime. His master could dispose of his person at will, and of everything acquired by his enforced and unrequited toil.

This complete subversion of the natural rights of millions, by which they were "deemed, held, taken, reputed, and adjudged in law to be chattels personal to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever," constituted a system antagonistic to the doctrines of reason and the monitions of conscience, and developed and gratified the most intense spirit of personal pride, a love of class distinctions, and the lust of dominion. Hence arose a commanding power, ever sensitive, jealous, proscriptive, dominating, and aggressive, which was recognized and fitly characterized as the Slave Power.

This slavery and this Slave Power, in their economical, social, moral, ecclesiastical, and political relations to the people and to the government, demoralizing the one and distracting the councils of the other, made up the vital issues of that "irrepressible conflict" which finally culminated in a civil war that startled the nations by its suddenness, fierceness, and gigantic proportions.

Half a century before the discovery of America, Portuguese and Spanish navigators had introduced African slaves into Europe. The English and other commercial nations followed their example. When, therefore, the Western Continent was opened to colonization and settlement, these nations were prepared to introduce slaves and to prosecute the African slave-traffic with vigor and on a large scale.

In the month of August, 1619, a Dutch ship entered James River with twenty African slaves. They were purchased by the colonists, and they and their offspring were held in perpetual servitude. Thus, at Jamestown, twelve years from the settlement of the colony of Virginia, and one year before the feet of the Pilgrims had touched the New World, began that system in the British continental colonies which, under the



fostering care of England, overspread the land. So near in time, though remote in points of destination, came those two vessels across the sea, with elements at once so potent and yet so unlike,— the “Mayflower,” with its freight of learning and Christian civilization ; the other, with its ill-starred burden of wretchedness and woe, bearing the seeds of a system destined, after a struggle of two hundred and forty years for development, expansion, and dominion, to light the fires of civil war, and perish in the flames its own hand had kindled.

During the years from 1619 to the opening of the American Revolution the friends of the slave-trade and of slavery controlled the government and dictated the policy of England. Her kings and queens, lords and commons, judges and attorney-generals, gave to the African slave-traffic their undeviating support. Her merchants and manufacturers clamored for its protection and extension. Her coffers were filled with gold bedewed with tears and stained with blood. “For more than a century,” in the words of Horace Mann, “did the madness of this traffic rage. During all those years the clock of eternity never counted out a minute that did not witness the cruel death, by treachery or violence, of some father or mother of Africa.”

Under the encouragement of British legislation and the fostering smile of royalty, more than three hundred thousand African bondmen were imported into the thirteen British colonies. The efforts of colonial legislation — whether dictated by humanity, interest, or fear — to check this traffic were defeated by the persistent policy of the British government. “Great Britain,” in the words of Bancroft, “steadily rejecting every colonial restriction on the slave-trade, instructed the governors, on pain of removal, not to give even a temporary assent to such laws.” The planters of Virginia, alarmed at the rapid increase of slaves, as early as 1726 imposed a tax to check their importation, but “the interfering interest of the African company obtained the repeal of that law.” South Carolina attempted restrictions upon the importation of slaves as late as 1760, for which she received the rebuke of the British authorities. The legislature of Pennsylvania, as early as 1712, passed an

act to prevent the increase of slaves ; but that act was annulled by the Crown. The legislature of Massachusetts, in 1771, and again in 1774, adopted measures for the abolition of the slave-trade ; but they failed to receive the approval of the colonial governors. Queen Anne, who had reserved for herself one quarter of the stock of the Royal African Company, that gigantic monopolist of the slave-trade, charged it to furnish full supplies of slaves to the colonies of New York and New Jersey, and instructed the governors of those colonies to give due encouragement to that company ; and it was the testimony of Madison that the British government constantly checked the attempts of his native State "to put a stop to this infernal traffic." Up to the hour of American Independence, the government of England steadily resisted colonial restrictions on the slave-trade, and persisted in forcing this traffic, so gainful to her commercial and manufacturing interests, upon her colonies, "which," in the words of the Earl of Dartmouth, in 1775, "were not allowed to check or discourage in any degree a traffic so beneficial to the nation." British avarice planted slavery in America ; British legislation sanctioned and maintained it ; British statesmen sustained and guarded it.

But the British government and British merchants were not alone responsible for the spread of slavery in the colonies. The inhabitants themselves were generally only too willing to profit by such enforced and unpaid toil. North Carolina was settled by colonies from Virginia, who carried slaves with them. Governor Sir John Yeamans brought slaves with him from Barbadoes into South Carolina, and planted slavery there. Georgia, however, was settled by colonies under the lead of James Oglethorpe, who held slavery to be a horrid crime against the gospel, as well as against the laws of England, and slavery was there forbidden. Some of the colonists, however, soon began to complain that they were prohibited the use of slave-labor. The laws were evaded ; slaves from South Carolina were hired, at first for short periods, and afterwards for life. Soon slave-ships sailed from Savannah for the coast of Africa, and slaves were introduced with the connivance of the British government, and Georgia became a slave State. Slav-

ery also readily found its way into the colonies of Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. The company interested in the colonization of New Jersey offered a land bounty of seventy-five acres for every slave introduced there. And the Royal African Company was enjoined by Queen Anne "to have a constant and sufficient supply of merchantable negroes" for this colony. The Dutch West India Company promised to supply the Dutch settlers of New York with slaves, — a promise afterwards renewed. They were then allowed to purchase slaves of others, and finally to engage in the foreign traffic itself. Nor did the rugged soil, or the still more rugged clime, of New England save its colonies from the introduction of the system even there. Slavery, however, grew slowly. In 1680 it was stated by Governor Bradstreet that there were only about one hundred and twenty African slaves in the colony of Massachusetts. At the end of a hundred years from the settlement of Plymouth there were estimated to be only about two thousand.

During the half-century preceding the Revolution slavery increased with rapidity, especially in the Southern colonies. There the production of tobacco, indigo, and rice became of great commercial importance to the mother country, and slavery felt its stimulating influence. There slaves toiled generally on large plantations, often under merciless overseers and the menace of the lash. In the colonies north of Mason and Dixon's line they were either employed in the families of the wealthy or belonged to small farmers who labored with their own servants and usually received them into their families. From this circumstance, and from the fact that they were accorded privileges under the laws and in the usages and customs of society, their condition was rendered more tolerable, and their character was less degraded than were the character and condition of Southern slaves.

In spite, however, of the avarice which guided and inspired the commercial and colonial policy of England, in spite of the corrupting influence of the slave-trade and of slavery itself, they found sturdy opposers in both England and America. The colonial legislature of Massachusetts of 1641 enacted in its code, styled the "Body of Liberties," that there should



never be any bond-slavery, unless it be of captives taken in "just war," or of such as willingly sold themselves or were sold to them, and such should have the liberties and Christian usages that God had established in Israel. Whether this act prohibited the slavery of Africans or not has been a question freely discussed, and on which differences of opinion have obtained. There can be no doubt, however, that the colonists of that day made a distinction between slaves captured in "just war" and those stolen in Africa, and that this act was based on this distinction. At any rate, it is safe to say that the servitude it authorized, with its recognized limitations of the Mosaic code, had little in common with the American slavery which afterwards obtained in all the colonies.

In 1646 two slaves were introduced into the colony by a member of a church, who had procured them in a slave-hunt in Africa. A memorial immediately presented to the General Court, setting forth the threefold outrage of "murder, man-stealing, and Sabbath-breaking," — the slave-hunt having taken place on the Sabbath, — drew forth a stringent order. "Conceiving themselves," they said, "bound by the first opportunity to bear witness against the heinous and crying sin of man-stealing," they supplemented their testimony with the requirement that the victims "should be sent to their native country, Guinea, and a letter," expressing "the indignation of the court thereabout." In November of that year it was enacted that "if any man stealeth a man, or mankind, he shall surely be put to death." The colony of Connecticut, in 1650, and the colony of New Haven, soon after, passed acts making man-stealing a capital offence.

Whatever differences of opinion there may have been concerning the full import and effects of the Massachusetts act of 1641, there can be none concerning that of the colony of Rhode Island, adopted in 1652. By this act it was provided that no "black mankind or white," "being forced by covenant-bond or otherwise," should serve more than ten years, or after the age of twenty-four years, but should be set free. "This noble act," says Moore, in his "Notes on Slavery in Massachusetts,"



"stands out in solitary grandeur in the middle of the seventeenth century, the first legislative enactment in the history of this continent, if not of the world, for the suppression of involuntary servitude." It was in view of this early legislation against African slavery and the slave-trade, and of the small number of slaves that found their way into the Massachusetts colonies during the first two generations of their history, that Whittier says: "It was not the rigor of her northern winter, nor the unfriendly soil of Massachusetts, which discouraged the introduction of slavery during the first half of the century of her existence as a colony. It was the recognition of the brotherhood of man in sin, suffering, and redemption, the awful responsibilities and eternal destinies of humanity, her hatred of wrong and tyranny, and her stern sense of justice, which led her to impose upon the African slave-trade the terrible penalty of the Mosaic code."

In spite, however, of this early legislation, and of the popular sentiment which prompted it, slavery made progress, the number of slaves slowly increased, and men were found ready to engage in the infamous traffic. The demoralizing influence of the Indian wars, and the recognition of the principle that captives taken in them might be rightfully held in bondage, contributed largely to this result. There were, however, earnest and faithful protestants who saw and deeply deplored the great and grievous wrong thus inflicted on both the Indian and the African. John Eliot, the apostle to the Indians, presented, in 1675, a memorial to the Governor and Council against selling captured Indians into slavery. His objections were that it prolonged the war, that it hindered the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, and that "the selling of souls is a dangerous merchandise." Though the mission of this large-hearted man was mainly with the Indians, he did not forget the African, but lamented, it is said by Cotton Mather, with "a bleeding and burning passion," "the destroying ignorance" in which they were left, by men bearing the name of Christian, "for fear of losing the benefit of their vassalage."

The iniquity of slavery and of the slave-trade, and the wrongs of the slave, were deeply felt by Justice Samuel Sewall,

afterwards Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. In the year 1700 he wrote a pamphlet entitled "The Selling of Joseph: A Memorial," in which slavery was characterized, and the primal truths of human equality and obligation were enunciated, with signal boldness and force. He maintained that "originally and naturally" there was no such thing as slavery; and that "these Ethiopians, as black as they are, seeing they are the sons and daughters of the first Adam, the brethren and sisters of the last Adam, and the offspring of God, they ought to be treated with respect agreeable."

Although this production was received, its faithful and fearless author says, "with frowns and hard words," there was a state of unrest in the public mind which revealed itself in various ways. The slaves themselves were uneasy under their bondage, and made no secret of their earnest longings for liberty. Though their increase was small, the most thoughtful and conscientious viewed that increase with apprehension, and earnestly desired the abolition of both the trade and the system. During the ten years immediately preceding the Declaration of Independence, in which the rights of man and of the colonies were under sharp discussion, the wrongfulness and inconsistency of slavery became more and more apparent. The desire for emancipation and the extinction of the slave-trade found utterance in sermons and pamphlets, some thorough and of decided merit, and in the resolutions and memorials of towns praying the legislature to take action at once in the interests of humanity and true patriotism.

But members of the society of Friends took the lead in this opposition. In the year 1688 a small body of German Quakers, at Germantown, Pennsylvania, presented a protest to the Yearly Meeting against the "buying, selling, and holding men in slavery." But though not then prepared to take action, it sent forth in 1696 the advice that "the members should discourage the introduction of slavery, and be careful of the moral and intellectual training of such as they held in servitude." Three years before this advice was given, George Keith, then a member of that society, had denounced slavery as contrary to the religion of Christ, the rights of man,

and sound reason and policy, and charged its members to "set their negroes at liberty after some reasonable time of service."

In New England the Quakers, at the Monthly Meeting at Dartmouth in 1716, sent to the Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting the query, "whether it be agreeable to truth for the Friends to purchase slaves and keep them for a term of life." The Quakers of Nantucket in the same year, moved by the eloquence of the wife of Nathaniel Starbuck, a preacher of their denomination, sent forth the declaration that "it is not agreeable to the truth for Friends to purchase slaves and hold them for the term of life." In 1729 they made an earnest appeal to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in which they say: "Inasmuch as we are restrained by the rule of discipline from being concerned in fetching or importing negro slaves from their own country, whether it is not as reasonable that we should be restricted from buying them when imported." At that time Elihu Coleman wrote a pamphlet against making men slaves, because it was "anti-christian" and "very opposite both to grace and nature."

Most faithful testimony against slavery was borne by William Burling, of Long Island, in the Yearly Meeting of the Friends. In 1729 Ralph Sandiford published "The Mystery of Iniquity," in which he earnestly condemned the sin of oppression. The ardent but eccentric Benjamin Lay, who had witnessed in Barbadoes scenes of cruelty to slaves that disturbed and distressed his sensitive nature, pleaded the cause of the bondman in a volume, published in 1737 by Benjamin Franklin. From 1746 to 1767 John Woolman, of New Jersey, travelled much in the Middle and Southern colonies, proclaiming to Christians that "the practice of continuing slavery is not right," and that "liberty is the natural right of all men equally." This humane, unselfish, and self-denying man, as he travelled among the people, saw "a dark gloominess overhanging the land," and "a spirit of fierceness and love of dominion." But, notwithstanding all that was calculated to depress and sadden his heart, he labored on with earnest and unconquerable zeal, and largely contributed to the work of preparing his denomination



to bear their early testimony against the sin and practice of slavery.

But the most active antislavery worker of that age was Anthony Benezet, the son of Huguenot parents, who escaped from France on account of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Having inherited an intense and passionate love of liberty, and becoming deeply affected by the iniquity of the slave-trade and the cruelty exercised toward slaves by their owners, he earnestly lifted up his voice on behalf of the oppressed, and strove to awaken Christians to a just sense of the sin of slaveholding. He established and taught gratuitously an evening school for the instruction of negroes. Under his pious labors their moral and religious advancement recommended the colored race to the notice of influential persons, too much accustomed to hold it in contempt. Among his many publications was an historical account of Guinea, which is said to have given an impulse to the mind of Thomas Clarkson, who afterward labored so effectively for the abolition of the slave-trade by the British government. He exerted himself to induce the legislature of Pennsylvania, in 1780, to begin the work of emancipation.

By the faithful and self-denying labors of these devoted pioneers and early advocates of antislavery, and others of less note, covering a period of a hundred years, was the society of Friends at length persuaded to rid itself of the system of enforced servitude. Nor was this great work accomplished without much of exciting discussion, stern rebuke, and stirring appeal. For with them, as with others, the love of ease and the lust of dominion were strong, nor did they at once and easily let go their hold on the victims of their power. And not until the conscience of the society was aroused by the unequivocal decisions of its ecclesiastical tribunals, showing slavery to be a sin to be repented of and forsaken, did it achieve the high distinction of being the first and only denomination to purge itself entirely of this great iniquity.

Nor were the people without remonstrance and warning from strangers, who, seeing the abomination of the system, boldly denounced its essential cruelty and wickedness. John Wesley,



who visited the country during the early part of the last century, unequivocally condemned it. His terse and trenchant characterization of slavery, so often repeated, — that it was “the sum of all villanies,” — was only one of many sharp things he uttered. He called the system “the vilest that ever saw the sun,” and denominated “slave-dealers man-stealers, — the worst of thieves, in comparison with whom highway robbers and housebreakers are comparatively innocent.” To these emphatic words he added that “men-buyers are exactly on a level with men-stealers.”

In 1739 George Whitefield, the renowned pulpit-orator and evangelist, having travelled extensively through the Southern States, addressed to their inhabitants a “Letter,” in which he combined the impressions of an eyewitness with the reflections of a Christian teacher. Affirming that his sympathies had been strongly excited by the “miseries of the poor negroes,” he called attention to the practice of slave-masters, and the encouragement it afforded to the savage tribes in Africa to continue their warfare on each other, to supply the demand for slaves thus created. He charged the “generality of” them with using their slaves “as bad as though they were brutes ; nay, worse,” — worse than their horses, which were “fed and properly cared for” after the labors of the day, while the slaves must grind their corn and prepare their own food, — worse even than their dogs, who are “caressed and fondled,” while the slaves “are scarce permitted to pick up the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.” He spoke of the cruel lashings which “ploughed their backs and made long furrows,” sometimes ending in death. He reminded them of their spacious houses and sumptuous fare ; while they to whose “indefatigable labors” their luxuries were “owing” had neither convenient food to eat nor proper raiment to put on.

Among the earlier apostles of emancipation was Dr. Samuel Hopkins, pastor of the Congregational Church in Newport, Rhode Island, who was as much distinguished for his advocacy of the doctrines of human rights as of the doctrines of the school of theology which bears his name. In 1770 he deliberately and solemnly resolved to attack the system of kidnapping, pur-

chasing, and retaining slaves. Although Rhode Island had, as early as 1652, passed an act against the purchase of negroes, she had become deeply involved in the slave-trade. Newport was the great slave-mart of New England. Cargoes of slaves were often landed near the church and home of the great divine. Before his congregation, thus deeply involved in the guilt of slave-trading and slaveholding, he boldly rebuked the sin and pleaded the cause of its victims in a discourse of great plainness and power. It was an unselfish and heroic act, imperilling his position both as a pastor and as a recognized leader in the church. Of this noble act Whittier says: "It may well be doubted whether, on that Sabbath day, the angels of God, in their wide survey of His universe, looked upon a nobler spectacle than that of the minister of Newport, rising up before his slaveholding congregation, and demanding, in the name of the Highest, 'the deliverance of the captive and the opening of prison doors to them that were bound!'"

From 1770 to 1776 Dr. Hopkins repeatedly spoke on behalf of the slave, visited from house to house, and urged masters to free their bondmen. In the latter year he published his dialogue concerning slavery, together with his address to slaveholders. He dedicated this remarkable production, said to have been "the ablest document which had at that time and on that theme appeared in the English language," to the Continental Congress. It had a large circulation among the statesmen of that day, and exerted a potent influence on public opinion. This early champion of the black man was cheered by the passage, in 1774, of a law prohibiting the importation of negroes into Rhode Island; and, in 1784, by the passage of an act declaring all children born after the next March free,—results to which he had largely contributed by his early, persistent, and self-denying labors. His heart was gladdened, too, by the action of his church. Instructed by his teachings and inspired by his zeal, it declared slavery to be "a gross violation of the righteousness and benevolence of the gospel," and therefore it resolved, "We will not tolerate it in this church."

In 1773 Dr. Benjamin Rush, an eminent physician, philan-

thropist, and statesman, published in Philadelphia "An Address to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements in America on Slave-keeping." In this address he combated the idea so persistently pressed by the supporters of the slave-trade, that it was impossible to carry on the production of sugar, rice, and indigo without negro slaves. "No manufactory," he said, with refreshing boldness and fidelity to truth, "can ever be of consequence enough to society to admit the least violation of the laws of justice or humanity." This early abolitionist eloquently pleaded the cause of "the unhappy Africans transported to America." Of the slave-traffic he said: "Future ages, when they read the accounts of the slave-trade, if they do not regard them as fabulous, will be at a loss which to condemn most, our folly or our guilt in abetting this direct violation of nature and religion."

These utterances of those earlier apostles of emancipation awoke responses in the bosoms of many of their countrymen. During the years of agitation preceding the Revolution, in which the liberties of the colonies and the rights of man were discussed with masterly power by the most gifted minds of the country, many of the popular leaders of New England, the Middle colonies, and even of Virginia, did not fail to see and to acknowledge the wrongfulness of slavery, and to denounce the slave-traffic and the slave-extending policy of the British government. Many slave-masters, who afterward aided in inaugurating the Revolution, in fighting its battles, and carrying the country over from colonial dependence to national independence, were hostile not only to the slave-trade, but to the existence of slavery itself.

On the 20th of October, 1774, the first Continental Congress signed and promulgated the Articles of Association. In that bond of union, which laid the foundation of the new nation, the pledge was made that the United Colonies would "neither import nor purchase any slave," and would "wholly discontinue the slave-trade." The explicit declaration was added, that any persons violating these Articles of Association should be pronounced "foes to the rights of British America," "universally contemned as the foes of American liberty," "unworthy



of the rights of freemen." This union of the inhabitants of the thirteen British colonies, thus making one people, was begun with a solemn pledge wholly to abstain from all participation in a traffic then supported by the commercial nations of Europe. The Articles of Association, containing these explicit pledges, were adopted by colonial conventions, county meetings, and lesser assemblages throughout the country, and became the fundamental Constitution of the first American Union.

That Congress gave expression to the general sentiment of the people of the colonies fully appears in the declarations of the North Carolina and Virginia conventions, which sent delegates to that Congress. These conventions pledged themselves not to import slaves, and not to purchase them when imported by others. In Georgia — a colony founded by James Oglethorpe, who forbade slavery there, but whose humane purposes were afterward thwarted by avarice and power — a public meeting declared "their disapprobation and abhorrence of the unnatural practice of slavery in America," and pledged their "utmost endeavors for the manumission of slaves in our colony." And Congress itself, on the 6th of April, 1776, resolved, without opposition, that "no slave be imported into any of the thirteen united colonies."

The British commercial and colonial policy, however, had interested, active, and influential supporters. Leading statesmen in South Carolina and Georgia were confessedly not only for slavery, but for the continuance of the slave-trade. In Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina slavery had still a strong hold upon the people. But their interest in the domestic quickened their opposition to the foreign slave-traffic. Although there were but few negroes in the Middle and New-England colonies, many of these having been made free by the voluntary action of their masters, still slavery and the slave-trade had zealous supporters, especially among the commercial, wealthy, and aristocratic classes. This fact was signally manifested by the action of Congress in striking from the original draft of the Declaration of Independence Mr. Jefferson's arraignment of the British king for forcing upon his American



colonies that traffic in men which he branded as an "execrable commerce," "a piratical warfare," "the opprobrium of infidel powers," "a cruel war against human nature." "That clause reprobating the enslaving of the inhabitants of Africa was struck out," its illustrious author declares, "in complaisance to South Carolina and Georgia, who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves, and who, on the contrary, still wished to continue it. Our Northern brethren, also, I believe, felt a little tender under those censures. Although their people had very few slaves themselves, yet they had been pretty considerable carriers of them to others."

The same spirit and policy which struck these words from the Declaration of Independence influenced the action of Congress in framing the Articles of Confederation. The report of the committee to prepare a plan provided that supplies should be obtained by requisitions on each State in proportion to the number of its inhabitants. This at once and necessarily raised the question of the *status* of the slave. Mr. Chase, of Maryland, afterwards one of the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, moved to count only the white inhabitants. "The negroes," he said, "were property, and no more members of the state than cattle."

It was suggested by Mr. Harrison, of Virginia, that two slaves should be counted as one freeman. Mr. Wilson, of Pennsylvania, said the exemption of slaves from taxation would be "the greatest encouragement to slave-keeping and the importation of slaves." He declared that they increased products and imposed burdens, and prevented freemen from cultivating the country. "Dismiss your slaves," he said; "freemen will take their places."

To this remark Mr. Lynch, of South Carolina, replied with emphasis, "Our slaves are our property; if that is debated, there is an end of confederation." He asked why they should "be taxed more than sheep." To this question Franklin replied: "Sheep will never make insurrections." Mr. Chase's amendment was rejected. Georgia was divided, and all the States north of Mason and Dixon's line voted against it.

The obstacles in the way of Confederation being found so

great, the discussion was then suspended ; but it was resumed again in October, 1777. It was then moved that the supplies be based on the value of property in each State. This proposition was rejected, and a motion was made to exempt slaves from taxation. The four New England States voted against it, New York and Pennsylvania were divided, and Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and New Jersey voted for it. This vote exempted slaves from taxation altogether, either as inhabitants or property. It was a complete triumph of those representing the slave interest, and may be counted among the earlier illustrations of the potent influence of the rising Slave Power.

No power was given to the Confederation to regulate commerce. Each State was left free to decide what imports it would admit or prohibit, so that Congress, after its emphatic condemnation by the acts of 1774 and 1776, "renounced forever," in the words of Bancroft, "the power to sanction or to stop the slave-trade." This result could not but enure to the interests of slavery and to the strengthening of its power.

But the Confederation secured to the free inhabitants of the State all privileges and immunities of the citizens of the several States. The legislature of South Carolina, when the Articles of Confederation were under consideration, saw that by this provision the rights of inter-citizenship were secured to the free colored inhabitants of all the States. After debate, the plan of Confederation was returned to Congress with the recommendation that inter-citizenship should be confined to white persons. South Carolina and Georgia supported the proposed change, but eight States refusing their assent, the proposition was lost. In this instance freedom won, and the claims of human equality were vindicated.

But it cannot be doubted that at the time of the Declaration of Independence, when the government of England ended and the government of the United States began, the people were, on the grounds of justice, humanity, and interest, largely in favor of putting an end to the African slave-trade. Neither can it be doubted that the most conscientious and enlightened portion of the people, including most of the Revo-

lutionary leaders, who guided the colonies through civil war to national unity and independence, believed slavery to be inconsistent with the doctrines they were proclaiming and the civil institutions they were founding. The statesmen of that era hoped, and confidently expected, that it would soon pass away. But the slave system, fostered by England and sustained by individual interest, indolence, and pride, during a hundred and fifty years, had so incorporated itself into the social life of the people, especially of the South, that, when menaced by the logic of events, it was seen to have a hold and tenacity of life not dreamed of by either friend or foe. Champions were ready not only to protect it against the advancing currents of Christian civilization, but also to oppose every interest, every institution, and every individual that menaced its paramount sway. Even then, when the Republic took its place in the family of nations, had begun and had far advanced that work of personal and public deterioration, — that poisoning of the fountains of individual and social life whose full development the Rebellion revealed, as it was itself their sad and legitimate result.

## CHAPTER II.

### ABOLITION. — ABOLITION SOCIETIES.

Articles of Association of the Colonies. — Colored Soldiers. — Slavery abolished in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. — The Pennsylvania Abolition Society. — New York Abolition Society. — Rhode Island Abolition Society. — The Abolition Societies of Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia. — Character of the Members of the Abolition Societies. — National Conventions.

THE Republic of the United States commenced its independent existence by the proclamation of the self-evident truths that all men are created equal, that all have an inalienable right to liberty, and that governments are instituted to secure these rights. Thus, in the Articles of Association and in the Declaration of Independence, pronounced by John Hancock "the ground and foundation of future government," these fundamental doctrines were recognized: that all men are by nature free, and that the American government was founded on the rights of human nature. Nor was this comprehensive assertion of rights limited by race or color. "The new republic," in the words of Bancroft, "as it took its place among the powers of the world, proclaimed its faith in the truth, reality, and unchangeableness of freedom, virtue, and right." This "assertion of right was made for the entire world of mankind and all coming generations, without any exception whatever."

When the United States joined the family of nations there were in the country about half a million persons of African descent. Nearly all were slaves; although there were a few, especially in the Eastern States, who had been emancipated. Some of these bore an honorable part in the War of Independence. Crispus Attucks, a colored patriot, was a leader, and the first martyr in the Boston massacre, on the 5th of March, 1770, which so fired the hearts and aroused the patriotism of



the people. One of that race mingled his blood with the fallen patriots of the 19th of April, 1775. The sons of Africa fought side by side with their countrymen of the white race at Bunker Hill, where Major Pitcairn, as he stormed the works, fell mortally wounded by the shot of Salem, a black soldier. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that some of the most heroic deeds of the War of Independence were performed by black men.

Rhode Island raised a colored regiment, commanded by Colonel Christopher Greene, the hero of Red Bank. Of the men of this regiment Governor Eustis, of Massachusetts, who had been Secretary of War under Jefferson, said in Congress, in 1820: "They discharged their duty with zeal and fidelity. The gallant defence of Red Bank, in which this regiment bore a part, is among the proofs of their valor." Tristram Burgess also said, in the House of Representatives, in 1828, that "no braver men met the enemy in battle." Of the conduct of these men in the Battle of Rhode Island, — pronounced by Lafayette "the best fought battle of the war," — Arnold, in his "History of Rhode Island," says: "It was in repelling these furious onsets that the newly raised black regiment, under Colonel Greene, distinguished itself by deeds of desperate valor. Posted behind a thicket in the valley, they three times drove back the Hessians, who charged repeatedly down the hill to dislodge them."

Connecticut raised a battalion of black soldiers, and Colonel David Humphrey, attached to the military family of Washington, accepted a command in this corps. The heroic defence of Fort Griswold, on the heights of Groton, by Colonel Ledyard and his brave comrades, was among the most brilliant achievements of the war. When the works were stormed, the British officer, exasperated by the heroic resistance encountered, inquired, "Who commands this fort?" "I did; you do now," replied Ledyard, handing the officer his sword, which was instantly seized and run through his own body. Lambert, a negro soldier, avenged the murder of his commander by thrusting his bayonet through the British officer, and then fell himself, pierced with thirty-three bayonet wounds.

The right of free negroes to bear arms in the country's de-

fence was not disputed in the more Northern colonies. At the opening of the war the Committee of Safety, in Massachusetts, declared that no slave should be admitted into the army upon any consideration whatever, as it would be "inconsistent with the principles that are to be supported, and reflect dishonor on this colony." Many were emancipated on condition of entering the army. Not always, however, did they receive the reward due to their bravery. In Maryland and Virginia, some who had served with fidelity to the close of the war were afterward dishonorably and wickedly reduced to slavery. When the heel of British tyranny was resting heavily on South Carolina and Georgia, Colonel John Laurens, a member of Washington's military family, sought to fill the patriot ranks by emancipating slaves and enrolling them in the ranks of the country's defenders. This eminently wise and patriotic effort, though encouraged by Congress, and sanctioned by Washington, met with little success; and that heroic son of South Carolina, whose life, near the close of hostilities, was given to the country, was forced to declare that "avarice, pusillanimity, and prejudice" defeated the measure.

In the midst of the war all the States, with the exception of Connecticut and Rhode Island, framed and adopted constitutions. The settlers of Vermont, in 1777, framed a constitution forever excluding slavery from that Commonwealth; but it did not become a State until after the adoption of the Federal Constitution. The constitution of Massachusetts was adopted in 1780. Its Bill of Rights declares that "all men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential, and inalienable rights; among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties."

Before the adoption of this constitution several unsuccessful attempts had been made to extirpate slavery and the slave-traffic. A bill for that purpose had been introduced in 1767; and three measures for the prohibition of the slave-trade had failed to receive executive approval. After the commencement of the war petitions were presented to the legislature in favor of emancipation. Among these petitions was one presented in 1777 by several colored persons, praying that they might

“be restored to the enjoyment of that freedom which is the natural right of all men.” It was referred to a committee, which promptly reported a bill “to prevent the practice of holding persons in slavery.” It declared that “the practice of holding Africans, and the children born of them, or any other person in slavery is unjustifiable in a civil government at a time when they are asserting their natural rights to freedom.” Before acting upon this bill, the legislature, fearing to give offence to some of the States, addressed a letter to the Continental Congress to ascertain its views concerning the expediency of such action. In this letter they say: “Convinced of the justice of the measure, we are restrained from passing it only from an apprehension that our brethren in the other colonies should conceive there was an impropriety in our determining on a question which may in its nature and operation be of extensive influence, without previously consulting your Honors.” “And,” they continue, “we ask the attention of your Honors to this matter, that, if consistent with the union and harmony of the United States, we may follow the dictates of our own understanding and feelings; at the same time assuring your Honors that we have such a sacred regard to the union and harmony of the United States as to conceive ourselves under obligation to refrain from any measure that should have a tendency to injure that union which is the basis of our defence and happiness.” To this communication, breathing the spirit of freedom, the desire to do justly, and their intense anxiety to preserve harmony, and not to break with the other States, no response was returned.

What, however, Massachusetts failed to effect by direct legislation was secured indirectly through the decisions of her Supreme Court based on a clause in her Bill of Rights. Cases soon arose involving the question of the legality of slavery under her new constitution in which such eminent lawyers and statesmen as Levi Lincoln, Caleb Strong, and Theodore Sedgwick were engaged in behalf of those claiming their freedom. By one of these decisions a master had lost ten slaves. In a memorial to the legislature for relief he urged as a reason for his plea that “by the determination of the Supreme Court the said



clause in the Bill of Rights is so to be construed as to operate to the total discharge and manumission of all negro servants whatsoever." So Massachusetts, while yet the war was raging for national independence, and before that independence was recognized by the treaty of peace, became a free State; taking her place in the van, — a relative position she has honorably maintained, not indeed without some faltering and mistakes, in the long struggle with slavery and the Slave Power.

In 1780 Pennsylvania, under the lead of George Bryan, and, no doubt, largely influenced by the indefatigable Anthony Benezet, who is said to have had a personal conference with every member of her legislature, passed "an act of gradual abolition," by which the importation of slaves was prohibited, and all persons born or brought into the State were made free. The minority, however, entered their protest; "because," they say, "if the time ever comes when slaves might be safely emancipated, we cannot agree to their being made free citizens in so extensive a manner." These protesting legislators further expressed their belief that the negroes would be satisfied "without giving them the right of voting for and being voted into office." In 1784 New Hampshire, like Massachusetts, became a free State by the judicial interpretation of her constitution.

The Virginia Assembly, on motion of Jefferson, in 1778, prohibited the further introduction of slaves; and in 1782 the old colonial statute was repealed, which forbade emancipations except for meritorious services. During this repeal, which continued in force for ten years, a large number of such manumissions took place. It was, however, subsequently re-enacted; and that source of just and humane individual action, being forcibly stopped, gradually dried up and ceased to flow. Maryland, like Virginia, both prohibited the introduction of slaves and removed the restriction on individual emancipation.

In the same year, immediately after the close of the war, the Pennsylvania Abolition Society was resuscitated. It had been organized before the Revolution, being the first abolition society ever formed, as it is now the oldest in the world. Its primary purpose was indicated by its name, "The society for the relief of free negroes, unlawfully held in bondage." In its



preamble it was stated that many were unlawfully held in bondage who were "justly entitled to their freedom by the laws and constitution." John Baldwin was its first president. A Committee of Inspection was appointed, whose title, in connection with the name of the society, sufficiently indicates the functions of their office. During the first year of its existence it was eminently successful in its operations. But the breaking out and progress of the war diverted and absorbed public attention. The active prosecution of its chosen work was mostly suspended, and no meetings were held until the year 1784. Although there are no records of its doings, it is not probable that such men were idle during that eventful period.

Upon its resuscitation the society commenced operations with great vigor, extending them wherever there were evils, incident to slavery, to be remedied or removed. As it became known and appreciated, men eminent for public service became members. In 1787 it revised its constitution, enlarged both its name and range of effort, and became "The Pennsylvania Society for promoting the abolition of slavery, the relief of free negroes unlawfully held in bondage, and for improving the condition of the African race." The illustrious Franklin was made its president. By accepting this trust and actively discharging its duties, he not only honored himself and the society, but he did much to vindicate his great reputation. By it he showed that among the statesmen of his day he was unseduced by sophistries and compromises, and remained true to the doctrine of human rights and the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence. It showed him, too, as distinguished for his broad philanthropy as for his practical sagacity; indeed, that his philanthropy was the highest style and development of that sagacity.

Thus reorganized and officered, it entered vigorously upon its long and honorable mission. Among its first acts was the distribution of copies of its constitution and the act for the gradual abolition of slavery in Pennsylvania to the governors of the several States. It also opened a correspondence with eminent men in the United States, England, and France. It

was a live society, catholic in its membership, and national and world-wide in the reach and range of its purposes and plans. Thus, learning that vessels were still surreptitiously fitted out in Pennsylvania for the slave-trade, it petitioned the legislature for a supplementary law to prevent it; and the law was enacted. Hearing that slave-ships were fitted out in Rhode Island for a similar purpose, it at once called the attention of the citizens of that State to the disgraceful traffic. In 1790 it addressed a memorial to Congress, signed by its distinguished president, asking that body to "step to the very verge of its power" in behalf of those held in bondage. Year after year, for almost half a century, it continued to memorialize Congress against oppression, and in the interests of humanity and freedom. It brought a case before the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania involving the question "whether slavery in any modification whatever is not inconsistent with the constitution of the State." Though the decision of the court was adverse, this effort revealed its activity and fidelity.

Ever on the alert, watching Congress, the State legislature, the courts, and the movements in other States, it was always ready, with remonstrance and advice, pecuniary or moral aid, to help forward the cause for which it was organized. And it was doubtless due to that zeal, watchfulness, and wide-spread influence, that the representatives of Pennsylvania occupied a position so honorable in their devotion to freedom and the claims of humanity during the first twenty years under the Constitution. But in the American Convention of Abolition Societies, in 1804, a decline of interest in the cause of emancipation was admitted and deplored, and the absence of delegates and communications from Southern societies was made the subject of regretful allusion. In 1809, after an active service of twenty-five years, it declared that "hitherto the approving voice of the community and the liberal interpretation of the laws have smoothed the path of duty and promoted a satisfactory issue to our humane exertions. At present, however, the sentiments of our fellow-citizens and the decisions of our courts are less auspicious."

But, in spite of these inauspicious indications, the Pennsyl-

vania Abolition Society toiled bravely on. It made special efforts against kidnapping; educated and secured homes for colored children. It examined laws respecting colored people, noted their defects, and prepared bills for the legislature. It memorialized Congress on the fugitive-slave law and the slave-trade. In 1818 it examined and condemned the colonization scheme, then just inaugurated. In 1819 it appointed a committee to watch the struggle for the admission of Missouri; and in 1820 it obtained from the government a portion of the school fund for colored children. In the same year it memorialized the legislature for the total abolition of slavery in that commonwealth. Three years afterward it sent to Congress an elaborate memorial against Southern laws imprisoning colored seamen; and in 1827 it "succeeded in procuring the erasure of the most obnoxious features" of a fugitive-slave bill introduced into the State legislature. In 1830 it procured a "supplementary law" to the act against kidnapping. Under its lead the American Convention met in Baltimore in 1828, and in Washington in 1829.

In the year 1833 it received a letter from the New Haven Antislavery Society, one of the first of the modern societies on the basis of immediate and unconditional emancipation. This veteran abolition society, which had been the leader in anti-slavery movements for half a century, cordially welcomed its new coadjutor. It took occasion, however, to refer to "the apathy which has so generally pervaded the United States upon this subject," — "a state of torpor and insensibility." Referring to the year 1794, when a convention of abolition societies was held in Philadelphia, it said, "Since that time we have seen one after another discontinue its labors, until we were left almost alone." From that time the society has continued steadfast in its support of the objects for which it was organized before the formation of the general government. Caring for the lowly ones by such methods as an earnest purpose and the wisdom of experience suggested, it has ever been mindful of the general interests of emancipation. Though long the acknowledged head of movements for the freedom and elevation of the African race, and long among the faith-



less found faithful only itself, yet, when the antislavery cause came up under other auspices, and on a basis more clearly defined, and better adapted to meet the exigencies of the country and the race, it gracefully relinquished the lead to those who, with fresher impulses, were but carrying out the aims it had so long and so faithfully pursued.

The New York Abolition Society was formed in January, 1785. Its officers were taken from the most illustrious men of that day in that Commonwealth. John Jay, who had characterized slavery as a crime of "crimson dye," was chosen president, and Alexander Hamilton secretary. Among its earlier acts was the printing, for gratuitous circulation, of the masterly argument of Dr. Hopkins, contained in his dialogue. The legislature of New York had refused, in 1785, to adopt a system of gradual emancipation. This society petitioned that body year after year, until, in 1799, such an act was passed, declaring all children born thereafter to be free, — males on becoming twenty-eight, and females on becoming twenty-five years of age.

The Rhode Island Society was organized in February, 1789. The first meeting for its formation was held at the house of Dr. Hopkins, at Newport, though the organization was completed at Providence. Several gentlemen of Massachusetts, eminent for philanthropy and piety, were members, and a few from other States, among whom was Jonathan Edwards, of Connecticut. Although Rhode Island had provided that all of African descent born after March, 1784, should be free, this society found sufficient scope for its labors in carrying out the objects of its formation, — "the abolition of slavery, the relief of persons unlawfully held in bondage, and for improving the condition of the African race."

In 1790 the Connecticut Abolition Society was formed. Dr. Ezra Stiles, president of Yale College, and Judge Baldwin, were its president and secretary. Though Connecticut, like Rhode Island, had passed an act in 1784 providing for the gradual abolition of slavery, and though there were less than three thousand slaves in the State, yet the strong proslavery feeling and conservative interest which obtained there opened



a wide and important field for its service. Numbering among its members some of the best and ablest men of a State which could then boast of many distinguished for their piety, learning, and political eminence, it labored with zeal and fidelity.

It was before this society that Jonathan Edwards the younger, in 1791, proclaimed that "every man who cannot show that his negro hath by his voluntary conduct forfeited his liberty, is obligated immediately to manumit him." Here was clearly promulgated the duty of immediate emancipation, as distinctly as it has ever been enunciated by any antislavery writer, orator, or society before or since. And this is a fact of some significance, as well as of justice, to some of those early pioneers in the cause of emancipation, because of the impression sometimes conveyed that this is a doctrine of more modern origin. Nor were the reasons assigned for this pronounced and unequivocal opinion less radical and uncompromising. "To hold a man," he solemnly avowed, "in a state of slavery who has a right to his liberty is to be every day guilty of robbing him of his liberty, or of man-stealing, and is a greater sin in the sight of God than concubinage or fornication."

Language more expressive of the essential wickedness of slavery could hardly be employed. And it is to be remembered that this was the opinion, not only of one of the leading minds of New England, but of a class of men which held with him the duty of immediate repentance for sin, and of another smaller but highly cultivated class which had accepted the new philosophy of the French school.

An Abolition Society was formed in New Jersey in 1792, which largely contributed to the extirpation of slavery in that State. Such societies were formed in the more Southern and more proslavery States of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. Belonging to them and their auxiliaries were some of their most eminent jurists and statesmen. They labored earnestly, and looked forward hopefully to the day, then generally anticipated, when slavery would yield to the benign influences of the Christian religion and of republican institutions, and pass away.

The Baltimore Abolition Society declared the objects of its association to be founded in "reason and humanity," and on "an avowed enmity to slavery in every form." The Virginia Abolition Society was equally clear and explicit in its avowal that righteousness exalteth a nation; and that slavery is not only an odious degradation, but an outrageous violation of one of the most essential rights of human nature, and utterly "repugnant to the precepts of the Gospel."

These early abolition societies embraced in their membership some of the purest philanthropists, the ripest scholars, most eminent jurists and the honored statesmen of that age. They were deeply imbued with the spirit of liberty, and were loyal to the precepts of Christianity. Ever zealous, earnest, and devoted, they labored effectively in the cause of emancipation and of the general elevation of the African race. For several years national conventions, in which these societies were represented, were annually held. Earnest arguments and appeals were made by these conventions to Congress, to the State legislatures, to the free people of color, and to the country, to aid in the suppression of the slave-trade, the repeal of inhuman statutes, the protection of free persons of color, and the promotion of the general interests of freedom.

The antislavery National Convention of 1795 addressed South Carolina, Georgia, and the people of the United States. The address to South Carolina was written by Jonathan Edwards the younger, a delegate from Connecticut. In that address he made an earnest appeal in favor of "a numerous class of men existing among them deprived of their natural rights and forcibly held in bondage." He called upon them to ameliorate their condition, and to diffuse knowledge among them. He declared, as a necessary consequence of the traffic in man, that "the minds of our citizens are debased and their hearts hardened by contemplating these people only through the medium of avarice or prejudice."

In the address to the people of the United States the Convention distinctly avowed its design to be "the universal emancipation of the wretched Africans who were yet in bondage." It thus appealed to the people of all the States:

“ We cannot forbear expressing to you our earnest desire that you will continue without ceasing to endeavor, by every method in your power which can promise any success, to procure either an absolute repeal of all the laws in your State which countenance slavery, or such an amelioration of them as will gradually produce an entire abolition. Yet, even should that great end be happily attained, it cannot put a period to the necessity of further labor. The education of the emancipated — the noblest and most arduous task which we have to perform — will require all our wisdom and virtue, and the constant exercise of the greatest skill and discretion. When we have broken his chains, and restored the African to the enjoyment of his rights, the great work of justice and benevolence is not accomplished. The new-born citizen must receive that instruction, and those powerful impressions of moral and religious truth, which will render him capable and desirous of fulfilling the various duties he owes to himself and to his country. By educating some in the higher branches of science, and all in the useful parts of learning, and in the precepts of religion and morality, we shall not only do away the reproach and calumny so unjustly lavished upon us, but confound the enemies of truth by evincing that the unhappy sons of Africa, in spite of the degrading influence of slavery, are in no wise inferior to the more fortunate inhabitants of Europe and America.”

The Convention, in these thorough and radical sentiments, unquestionably represented the views, principles, and purposes of the abolition societies of those days. As a mode of action, they recommended periodical discourses “on the subject of slavery and the means of its abolition”; and they supported their recommendation by considerations not often exceeded in thoroughness, cogency, and forcible expression. “If to many persons,” they say, “who continue the hateful practice of enslaving their fellow-men, were often applied the force of reason and the persuasion of eloquence, they might be awakened to a sense of their injustice and startled with horror at the enormity of their conduct.”

While enlightened, liberal, and Christian statesmen and philanthropists believed with Franklin that slavery was “an atro-



cious debasement of human nature," and desired with Washington to see some plan adopted by which it "could be abolished by law," there was a powerful class, especially in the Carolinas and Georgia, that actively and persistently resisted everything that tended to the destruction of a system which secured to them wealth, social distinction, and political power. It is indeed true, that the best portion of the cultivated and Christian mind of that day saw the essential injustice and enormity of slavery, and the duty of its discontinuance, as clearly as they have ever been seen since. But the uneducated and unreflecting masses, taking counsel of their feelings of indolence and avarice, and of those induced, in the language of Jefferson, by their "quiet and monotonous course of colonial life," largely influenced and led, too, by the dominant class, had little sympathy with these abstract ideas of right, justice, and humanity, and little disposition to legislate in harmony with them. Mr. Jefferson wrote, near the close of life, that he "soon saw that nothing was to be hoped from such"; and he added that, at the first or second session of the Virginia legislature, of which he himself was a member, Colonel Bland, "one of the oldest, ablest, and most respectable members, was denounced as an enemy to his country, and was treated with the greatest indecorum," for moving "a moderate protection of the laws to these people."

Although the leading men of Virginia — Washington, Jefferson, Henry, and Mason — were hostile to slavery, and were pronounced emancipationists, yet so powerful and despotic was the slaveholding class, and so indifferent were the masses of the people, that Washington, writing to Lafayette in 1785, only two years after the close of the war fought in the name of human equality, confessed that "petitions for the abolition of slavery presented to the Virginia legislature could scarcely obtain a hearing." Thus it happened that the same people, speaking in the language of their most humane and cultivated men, — divines, philanthropists, statesmen, and illustrious Revolutionary leaders, — uttered the clear, ringing words of liberty; while by their legislation, under the malign influence of slavery, they gave the lie to these utterances and framed iniquity into law.



## CHAPTER III.

### SLAVERY IN THE TERRITORIES. — ORDINANCE OF 1787.

Public Domain. — Cessions of Territory by the States. — Mr. Jefferson's proposed Inhibition of Slavery in the Territories. — Ordinance of 1787, reported by Nathan Dane. — Adopted by Congress. — Sanctioned by First Congress under the Constitution. — Efforts to suspend it in Indiana. — Blessings of the Ordinance of 1787. — Cessions of North Carolina and Georgia, with Limitations concerning Slavery. — The Mississippi Territory. — Debate on Mr. Thatcher's Antislavery Amendment.

THE Treaty of Peace, by which the independence of the thirteen British Colonies was acknowledged, was signed at Paris on the 30th of November, 1782. Beyond the western boundaries of the States, and between the 31st and 47th parallels of latitude, lay a vast and fertile territory, conceded to be embraced within the limits of the new Republic. Not only were these rich lands looked to as a source of revenue for the payment of the debt incurred in the War of Independence, but the far-seeing statesmen of that day saw that States carved from this territory would exert a powerful, if not controlling influence in shaping the destinies of the country. To the future of the United States it was then a question of transcendent importance whether it should be organized into free or slave States. Hence, among the first measures of the Continental Congress, after the British forces had left the country, was an effort to fix the condition of this immense public domain.

The States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia each claimed severally, under their respective charters, a portion of this territory. These claims were warmly opposed by the landless States, which justly held that this territory had been conjointly won, and should therefore inure to the common benefit.

On the first day of March, 1784, Mr. Jefferson presented to the Continental Congress, then assembled in Annapolis, a deed of cession of all the lands claimed by Virginia northwest of the Ohio River. A select committee was appointed, consisting of himself, Mr. Chase of Maryland, and Mr. Howell of Rhode Island; and this committee reported a plan for the government of the territory ceded, or to be ceded. This plan contemplated its ultimate division into seventeen States. It was therein provided that, "after the year of the Christian era 1800, there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of these States, otherwise than in the punishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted."

This provision was stricken out on motion of Mr. Spaight of North Carolina, seconded by Mr. Read of South Carolina. It required the votes of nine States to retain it as a part of the ordinance. Only six voted for it, — New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania. Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina voted against it. North Carolina was divided. Delaware and Georgia were not present. Mr. Dick of New Jersey voted to retain it; but as two members were required to give the vote of a State, that State was not represented in the vote. Though sixteen members voted for the prohibition of slavery, and only seven voted against it, yet then, as so often since, slavery, though in a lean minority, gained a victory that should have fallen to the other side. This important measure would have saved to freedom not only the territory of the Northwest, but also Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi.

In March, 1785, Rufus King, a delegate from Massachusetts, moved to modify the report made at the previous session, by inserting therein a total and immediate prohibition of slavery; but his motion failed. In July, 1787, a committee, of which Nathan Dane of Massachusetts was chairman, reported an ordinance for the territory northwest of the Ohio, in which there should be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude. With it there was, however, a stipulation for the rendition of fugitive slaves. This ordinance — which consecrated to freedom the fertile territory covered now by the great States of

Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin — was passed on the 13th of July, 1787 ; every State voting for it, Mr. Yates of New York alone voting against it.

In July, 1789, Mr. Fitzsimmons of Pennsylvania reported in the House of Representatives a bill for the government of the territory northwest of the Ohio River, which passed both houses without opposition. This act gave the emphatic sanction of the first Congress under the Constitution to the ordinance of 1787, prohibiting forever slavery in the territory northwest of the Ohio.

But, notwithstanding this prohibition was so solemnly and with such unanimity adopted, the most persistent efforts were subsequently made to give slavery a foothold in that region. After the admission of Ohio as a free State, the remainder of that territory was organized under the name of the Territory of Indiana. Most of its settlers, coming from the slaveholding States, — with their former tastes, habits, and prejudices, — soon memorialized Congress for a temporary suspension of the ordinance. The convention which sent this memorial was held in 1802. Its presiding officer was Governor William Henry Harrison, afterward President of the United States. The memorial was referred by the House to a select committee, of which John Randolph, the brilliant but erratic Virginian, was chairman. This committee reported that it was “highly dangerous and inexpedient to impair a provision wisely calculated to promote the happiness and prosperity of the Northern country.” No action was taken, as the session terminated the following day.

In the next Congress the subject was referred to a committee of which Cæsar Rodney of Delaware — afterward Attorney-General of the United States — was made chairman, and it reported in favor of a suspension of the antislavery restriction for a limited time. Early in February, 1806, James M. Garnett of Virginia, from a select committee, made a like report, though, as in the previous case, no action was taken. Another committee was appointed during the next year, of which Mr. Parke, a delegate from the Territory, was chairman, to which was referred a letter from Governor Harrison, with

resolves from the Territorial legislature, favoring a temporary suspension of the inhibition. On the 12th of February this committee reported that the ordinance be suspended for ten years from the 1st of January, 1808. Though this was the third report proposing a temporary suspension of the ordinance of 1787, Congress took no action upon either.

Governor Harrison and the legislature again united in a like request, though at this time a portion of the inhabitants remonstrated against granting it. The subject in the Senate was referred to a select committee, consisting of Franklin of North Carolina, Kitchell of New Jersey, and Tiffin of Ohio. On the 13th of November, 1807, this committee reported a resolve, declaring it not expedient to suspend the sixth article of the compact for the government of the territory northwest of the Ohio. This report closed the efforts made by an undoubted majority of the people of the Territory to be at least temporarily relieved from the operation of this ordinance. In this struggle it is to be noted that they had the effective support and hearty co-operation of General Harrison, their governor, whom the nation with so much enthusiasm bore into the Presidential chair in 1840. Had their wishes prevailed, however, and those imperial States been lost to freedom, who can estimate the increased dangers that would have imperilled the nation and darkened its pathway? Who can comprehend the aggravated difficulties which would have attended the then future, but now accomplished, work of emancipation? There is little danger of overestimating the benefits which the ordinance of 1787 has conferred on the Northwest, or the measureless perils from which it saved the land. Its enactment must ever stand as one of the great events of American history, one of the most important achievements in behalf of freedom.

Virginia having retained her claim to the Territory of Kentucky, into which many of her citizens had taken their slaves, a new slave State was early carved out of it and added to the Union. North Carolina, too, laid claim to Western territory, but ceded Tennessee, in 1789, upon the condition that "no regulation made or to be made by Congress should tend to



the emancipation of slaves." This deed of cession was laid before the Senate in the winter of 1790, and referred to a committee, of which Oliver Ellsworth, afterward Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, was chairman. He reported a bill accepting the cession, and providing that the ordinance for the government of the Northwest Territory should be applied to this cession, excepting, however, the clause prohibiting slavery. The bill passed the Senate without division; was briefly debated in the House, and concurred in with little opposition. Slavery had already entered the Territory; and Congress, consenting with more or less reluctance to the hard conditions imposed, gave assent to its continuance.

Georgia claimed the territory forming subsequently the States of Alabama and Mississippi. She did not promptly follow the example of her sister States in ceding her territorial claims to the general government; as her cession was not made until the 2d of April, 1802, and then upon the peremptory condition that the ordinance of 1787 "shall, in all its parts, extend to the territory contained in the present cession, the article only excepted which forbids slavery."

Although Georgia had not previously relinquished her claim to the Mississippi territory, still settlements had been made there, and the duty was imposed upon Congress of legislating for the government of the people of that region. In March, 1798, the House of Representatives proceeded to the consideration of the bill for the government of that Territory. It expressly provided that a government similar in all respects to that of the Northwestern Territory should be established, the inhibition of slavery only excepted. Mr. Thatcher of Massachusetts remarking that he intended to make a motion touching the rights of man, moved to strike out the excepting clause. Mr. Harper of South Carolina said that this was not a legitimate mode of supporting the rights of man. The regulation prohibiting slavery in the Northwest was proper; but it would not be so in Mississippi. It would be a decree of the banishment of all persons settled there, and a decree of the exclusion of all persons intending to go there. Mr. Varnum, of Massachusetts, afterward Speaker of the House,

declared that Mr. Harper's remarks showed that he did not wish to support the rights of all men ; for " where there was a disposition to retain a part of our species in slavery there could not be proper respect for the rights of mankind." He looked upon the practice of holding blacks in slavery in this country to be equally criminal with the practice of the Algerines in carrying American citizens into slavery. Mr. Rutledge wished Mr. Thatcher to withdraw his motion. He remarked that one gentleman called these men " property " ; another said, " you hold these men in chains " ; and another declared, " you violate the rights of man," and wished to know if these men were not property, and held as such by the Spanish government.

Mr. Otis of Massachusetts — an early representative of that class of Northern politicians who have always existed in sufficient numbers to betray their section in an emergency, and give to slavery the victory — expressed the hope that Mr. Thatcher would not withdraw his amendment. He desired, he said, that " an opportunity might be given to gentlemen who came from the North to manifest that it was not their disposition to interfere with the South in regard to that species of property." He thought, he said, — and thus invited the very violence he seemed to deprecate, — that if the amendment was adopted that no slavery should exist in the territory it would be not only a sentence of banishment, but of war ; that an immediate insurrection would take place, and that the inhabitants would not be suffered to retire, but would be massacred on the spot.

Mr. Foster, of the same State, thought that if the amendment was not withdrawn, a long debate might be had upon it. To these remarks of his colleagues Mr. Thatcher replied that he should not withdraw his motion. Believing his course to be just, the more it was opposed the more obstinate he should be in its support. Mr. Giles of Virginia then made the suggestion, often repeated since, that if the slaves of other States were permitted to go to the Western States, and thus spread themselves over a larger territory, there would be a greater prospect of ameliorating their condition. Mr. Hartley of

Pennsylvania felt compelled to vote against the amendment, although he desired to gratify the wishes of philanthropists by doing away with the system of slavery altogether.

Mr. Gallatin of Pennsylvania, a gentleman of great learning and capacity, who afterward rendered signal service to his country as a financier and diplomatist, maintained that the amendment striking out the provision of the bill which allowed slavery in the Territory, could not be rejected for want of jurisdiction. He confessed he could not see how forbidding slavery in Mississippi could affect it in South Carolina, any more than forbidding it in the Northwest Territory. If the amendment was rejected, slavery was established for that country, not only during its temporary government, but during all the time it should be a State. The number of slaves would become so large, by constant increase, that when the Territory became a State the slaveholders would be able to secure a constitution recognizing and protecting slavery, and thereby making it permanent. Having determined that slavery would be bad policy for the Northwest Territory, he saw no reason for a contrary determination in respect to the Mississippi Territory.

Mr. Nicholas of Virginia thought that the rejection of the amendment would be not only for the interest of the Territory, but of the United States. But Mr. Thatcher firmly declared that he could never be brought to believe that an individual could have a right in anything that tended to the destruction of the government; that he could have a right in any wrong, as "property in slaves was founded in wrong, and never could be right." Slavery "must be put a stop to; and the sooner it was begun the better." The amendment was lost, only twelve members voting for it. The bill, however, was amended, on motion of Mr. Harper, so as to prohibit the introduction of slavery into the Territory from beyond the limits of the United States.

In this, the first debate in Congress on the question of permitting or excluding slavery in the Territories, members eminent as jurists and statesmen participated. Although they entertained different views of its expediency, none of them questioned or doubted its constitutionality. The power of Con-



gress to prohibit slavery in the Territories was then conceded by the statesmen of the South as well as by the statesmen of the North. The dogma of "no power in Congress to prohibit slavery in the Territories" had not then been invented.

By this legislation the character of all the territory of the United States was then fixed. Mr. Jefferson's proposition, made in 1784, would have prohibited slavery after 1800 in all that territory. It has ever been a source of profound regret to the friends of freedom that his proposition failed. In the light of subsequent events, however, it is not at all clear that more would have been gained to freedom by its adoption than was secured by Mr. Dane's ordinance, which only applied to the Territory northwest of the Ohio River. Had slavery been allowed in the Northwest Territory till the year 1800, a more powerful and persistent effort — and perhaps one more successful — would have been made for its retention than was actually made by the emigrants from the South and the few old French settlers, who, in spite of the ordinance, retained some in servitude, and strove to legalize the system temporarily, and make, if possible, Indiana and Illinois slave States.

After the adoption of the Constitution the slaveholding class, from the Potomac to the Gulf, rapidly increased in wealth, social influence, and political power. Emigrants from those States settled the Territory south of the Ohio, and carried to that region the habits, prejudices, and interests of their section. They might have taken their slaves with them, made slave laws and constitutions, and sought admission into the Union. Perhaps the ordinance itself might have been temporarily, partially, or wholly set aside by the slaveholding class, which obtained control of the Federal government at the beginning of the century, and held it for two generations. While Mr. Jefferson's proviso might and probably would have failed to secure to freedom the territory south of the Ohio, it might have imperilled it in the territory northwest of that river. Mr. Dane's ordinance of 1787 probably won for freedom all that could have been securely held, and will ever stand as one of the grandest achievements in American history.



## CHAPTER IV.

COMPROMISES OF THE CONSTITUTION. — SLAVE REPRESENTATION.  
— SLAVE-TRADE. — RENDITION OF FUGITIVE SLAVES.

The Failure of the Confederation. — Distress and Discontent of the People. — Assembling of the Convention to frame a Constitution. — Difficulties and Dangers. — Antagonism between Freedom and Slavery. — Basis of Representation. — Debates thereon. — Northern and Southern Parties developed. — Slaveholding Interest successful. — Committee of Detail. — Duties on Exports. — Regulation of Commerce. — Slave-trade. — South Carolina and Georgia demand its Continuance. — The Bargain. — Slave Representation. — Slave-trade to be continued Twenty Years. — Rendition of Fugitive Slaves. — The Compromise. — The Slave Power developed.

WHEN the British forces had been withdrawn from the country, the American army disbanded, and then, the common danger removed, other evils revealed themselves and other dangers menaced. The people were deeply embarrassed by public and private indebtedness, by a depreciated currency, and by the general derangement of business, resulting from an exhausting warfare with the first power of the globe. It became almost impossible to enforce the collection of debts or to maintain public order. The distress and discontent of the people revealed themselves in forcible attempts to obstruct the action of the judicial tribunals, while the public disorders threatened anarchy and civil war. Then, too, the Confederation, which had so signally failed to command fully the resources of the country during the war, more clearly manifested its weakness. Then the statesmen and soldiers, whose wisdom and valor had carried the country through the Revolution, were profoundly concerned at the grave and ominous aspect of national affairs. Under this pressure of difficulties and dangers, which threatened to defeat and destroy much of what had been gained and won by the blood and treasure, the hard-

ships and hazards of the contest, a convention was called to revise the Articles of Confederation ; and it gave the country the Constitution of the United States.

The convention assembled at Philadelphia in May, 1787. It was a body of men of marked ability and large experience in public affairs. It embraced many of the Revolutionary leaders, from both council-chamber and field, while among its younger members were several who at once took rank among the foremost public men of the new Republic. Nor did their abilities exceed their necessities, or transcend the greatness of the occasion. To make "a more perfect union" of States so widely scattered on a narrow strip of the Atlantic coast, so diverse in origin and history, so alien in spirit and purpose, so jealous of their own interests and fearful of the encroachments of others, impoverished and distressed by war, might reasonably be expected to disclose difficulties of the gravest import. In forming such a general government, of States so unequal in territory, population, and wealth, there would naturally exist not merely the general reluctance to relinquish their individual prerogatives as independent States, but also the fear of the larger States, that in the government their influence would not be commensurate with their relative size, while the smaller States would hardly be satisfied with a share graduated by any such standard. Their history immediately preceding the assembling of the convention had but aggravated this natural tendency. State rights had been vigilantly guarded, and State power reluctantly relinquished to the Continental Congress, even under the pressing exigencies of war. State pride, too, was intense ; State rivalries and jealousies were active. Consequently, the more thoughtful members of the convention apprehended that the main hindrances in the way of success would spring from such sources,—indeed, that the great difficulty would be to reconcile the differences between the larger and smaller States. The result, however, revealed the fact that all these difficulties were, if not lost, overshadowed by another issue far more serious and threatening. The real obstacle was found in the antagonism between freedom and slavery, between the States which had accepted

and were accepting the former and the States which clung with such persistent determination to the latter. Indeed, we have the statement of Mr. Madison himself that "the institution of slavery and its consequences furnished the line of discrimination." Nor, in the lights of the present day and the revelations of the nation's subsequent history, is this at all surprising.

The theory of human equality had been enunciated by the first Continental Congress, and proclaimed in the deathless words of the Declaration of Independence. It had been incorporated into the Bills of Rights of several of the States, and had been illustrated by the judicial proceedings of several of their courts. It was held by some of the most eminent members of the convention, and also by other leading statesmen of that era. But there came into this convention of illustrious men, assembled to frame a constitution for a Christian nation, a powerful minority believing in and representing chattel slavery. In that crisis of the country, — when its very existence was in peril, and the only alternative seemed to be a constitution or anarchy, — that minority made it a condition precedent to their assent that the convention should comply with the exactions of the slaveholding interest. The representatives of that interest, — able, arbitrary, and adroit, — taking advantage of the necessities of the country, wrung from the convention fatal concessions, which then and thereafter trammelled the hand of Liberty and armed the hand of Slavery.

The framers of the Constitution have been sharply criticised for their concessions to the slaveholding interest. These concessions, in direct antagonism with the doctrines of human rights so grandly proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, greatly embarrassed them then, and have been used with fatal force by the Slave Power in its dominating and aggressive career since. But posterity, remembering the fearful stress of circumstances under which those concessions were made, and recalling the significant question of Alexander Hamilton, "Is it possible to deliberate between anarchy and confusion on one side, and the chance of good on the other?" will min-



gle large charity with its censure. Whatever may be the judgments of coming generations, removed from the disturbing and distorting influences of the past and present hour, and occupying a higher plane of thought and feeling, concerning the framers of the Constitution and their concessions to the Slave Power under the terrible pressure to which they were subjected, it does not become the men of later times, who have made compromise after compromise, far greater sacrifices of principle, and far more guilty concessions, with but a tithe of that pressure resting upon them, to reproach them. Whoever else may be, they are not the men to cast stones.

There was a great struggle in the convention touching the basis of representation in Congress, in which the question of slavery largely mingled. It originated in the strife between the larger and smaller States, the latter contending for an equal and the former for a proportional representation. The Virginia plan proposed to base the representation on free inhabitants and three fifths of all other persons. Twice the convention voted in favor of a proportional representation. Having failed to secure an equal representation in the House, the party representing the smaller States made a strenuous effort to secure an equality of representation in the Senate; but the proposition was defeated by a tie vote. The State-rights members, being defeated, manifested much dissatisfaction.

On motion of Mr. Sherman of Connecticut, a committee of conference of one from each State was appointed. In this committee Franklin proposed that the States should be equally represented in the Senate; while for the House the Virginia proposition should be adopted, allowing one representative for forty thousand inhabitants, slaves being counted in the ratio of three fifths.

It having been determined that the States should not be equally represented in the House, new questions arose, and new divisions and parties were developed. A committee, consisting of Morris, Gorham, King, Randolph, and Rutledge, reported a proposition that future representation should be distributed among the States in a compound proportion of wealth and numbers. This report was referred to a committee of one



from each State; and this committee reported the temporary apportionment finally introduced into the Constitution, with a House of sixty-five members. Future apportionments, however, could not be easily determined.

Mr. Patterson of New Jersey, one of the leaders of the party of State Rights, opposed the representation of slaves, because it afforded an "indirect encouragement of the slave-trade." He said that Congress, in its acts concerning the quota of troops, was ashamed to use the word "slave," and substituted a description. He could look upon slaves in no other light than as property, and strenuously opposed their representation. In reply, Mr. Madison admitted the soundness of the general principle, but thought it should forever silence the claims of the small States; and he suggested that the House should be based on the whole number of free inhabitants, and the Senate, which represented property, on the whole number, including slaves.

Mr. King expressed the opinion that the Southern States, being the richest, would not league themselves with the Northern unless some attention was paid to their wealth. It was proposed by Mr. Randolph that the future apportionments should be regulated by a periodical census. It was then moved, as a substitute, by Mr. Williamson of North Carolina, to reckon in the census the freemen, and three fifths of all other persons. It was strenuously insisted by Pierce Butler and Charles C. Pinckney, of South Carolina, that slaves should be counted like all other persons. Mr. Williamson's proposition was supported by Mr. Gorham and Mr. Gerry, of Massachusetts. It was insisted by Mr. Butler that the labor of a slave in South Carolina is as productive as that of a freeman in Massachusetts; that slaves are as valuable to the nation as freemen, and that an equal representation ought to be allowed.

Mr. Mason of Virginia thought slaves ought not to be excluded in the basis of representation; but that they were not equal to freemen. The three-fifths clause was stoutly opposed by Mr. Morris, as "an encouragement to the slave-trade, an injustice to human nature." Mr. Wilson of Pennsylvania was apprehensive that the people of his State would be disgusted

by this "blending of blacks and whites." He thought, if slaves were admitted as citizens, they should be admitted on an equality with other citizens; but if as property, then, he asked, why not admit them as other property? Mr. Butler's amendment to count slaves equally with free persons was lost, — Delaware, South Carolina, and Georgia only voting for it. Mr. Williamson's substitute, basing the House on a periodical census of the inhabitants, slaves being counted in the ratio of three fifths, was defeated, — Massachusetts, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and South Carolina voting against it. South Carolina voted against it because she demanded an equal representation for slaves. The proposition of Mr. Randolph for a periodical census was also defeated. It was then unanimously agreed, on motion of Mr. Morris, that taxation should be in proportion to representation.

Up to this point, though the struggle had been sharp, slavery had rather lost than gained. The three propositions — to count the slaves according to their numbers, to count them in the ratio of three fifths, and to have a periodical census taken — had been lost. The proposition now before the convention was to base all future apportionments upon the compound ratio of wealth and numbers. As parliamentary eloquence and tactics had not succeeded, something more stringent was demanded. The soft words of persuasion had failed; the virtue of stones must be tried. The ever-present and ever-potent argument of the plantation — the whip — must be put in requisition. Nor did it fail. The recusant members were at once brought to terms, and the fatal lesson was taught and learned which was not forgotten for nearly three quarters of a century.

General Davie of North Carolina, who had been a silent member to that time, arose and emphatically declared, "It is time to speak out. I see," he said, "that it is meant by some gentlemen to deprive the Southern States of any representation of their blacks. I am sure that North Carolina will never confederate on any terms that do not rate them at least as three fifths. If the Eastern States mean to exclude them altogether, then the business is at an end." The menace was effective, and secured at once what no amount of debate had

accomplished. Mr. Johnson of Connecticut at once arose and hastened to declare that the whole population should be counted. Mr. Randolph renewed the proposition to count slaves as three fifths in the basis of representation. The proposition was now carried, — Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia voting for it; New Jersey and Delaware opposing it; while Massachusetts and South Carolina divided. By this vote it was provided that the half a million slaves in the five Southern States, and their increase in coming years, should be counted in the basis of representation in the House, and in the Electoral College, in the ratio of three fifths.

Thus, by this most illogical measure, by which votes were given, in effect, to a portion of the community from which not only the right of citizenship, but all rights, were studiously withheld, — and these votes not to be cast by themselves, and for their benefit, but by their masters, for their injury, — large power was placed in the hands of the slaveholding class, which was long used with terrible effect for its aggrandizement and the nation's harm. In many of the sharply contested and evenly balanced struggles between the friends and foes of freedom it gave the latter the needed majority and turned the scale against the cause of justice. In the great struggle of 1820, to make Missouri free, it gave to slavery its victory; and in that of 1854, to remove the landmarks of freedom, its power for evil was equally decisive. In 1800 it decided the presidential election, and gave it to the slaveholding Democracy, and thus enthroned the Slave Power in the General Government, from which it was never dislodged until the election of Mr. Lincoln.

On the 24th of July a Committee of Detail was appointed, consisting of Rutledge, Randolph, Gorham, Ellsworth, and Wilson. To this committee was referred the work of the convention, embodied in twenty-three resolutions, and the propositions offered by Mr. Charles Pinckney of South Carolina, and also of Mr. Patterson of New Jersey. Mr. Charles C. Pinckney, one of the most eminent men of that age, the very embodiment and exponent of the rising Slave Power, perhaps



emboldened by the success of the member from North Carolina, rose and pronounced another ultimatum of Southern demands. He reminded the convention that if it did not provide proper security for Southern interests he should vote against whatever report the committee should bring in. In other words, it was a notice to the convention that the South would demand not only an enumeration of slaves in the basis of representation, but the right to continue their importation without taxation, and such other guaranties as the exigencies of their peculiar institution demanded.

On the 6th of August the Committee of Detail brought in its report. It was in substance a sketch of the Constitution as finally adopted. It provided that no duty should be laid on exports, and that no navigation acts should be passed except by a two-thirds vote. The importation of slaves was not to be prohibited ; neither was any tax to be imposed upon such importation. Those provisions were wholly in the interest of the slaveholders. The exports of rice, tobacco, and indigo — products of slave labor — were not to be taxed. Slaves were to be imported untaxed and without hindrance from the Federal government. Foreign vessels were to enter Southern ports and carry Southern products unembarrassed by any discriminating duties in favor of Northern shipping.

The avarice, the ambition, and the sagacity of the slaveholding interest have never been more clearly revealed than in this report of the Committee of Detail. At its head stood John Rutledge, who completely embodied the pride, arrogance, and dominating characteristics of the extreme South, and who needed no hint from his colleague to watch over and guard its interests. Had the subtle and adroit policy of that report been fully indorsed and adopted by the convention and the people, the ascendancy of the slave States, and the consequent humiliation and helplessness of the free States, would have been complete.

The first Continental Congress, in the Articles of Association, had pledged the united colonies against the importation of slaves ; and the Congress of 1776, in releasing the colonies



from some of the provisions of the Articles of Association, had resolved that "no slave be imported into any of the United States." Most of the States had united in prohibiting the slave-trade. North Carolina had imposed a duty on importations; while South Carolina and Georgia were in favor, not only of perpetuating slavery, but also of continuing the slave-traffic. Some Northern merchants, forgetful of the pledges of the government, still employed their ships in the hateful trade. Two years before the assembling of the convention, Dr. Samuel Hopkins had stated that portions of the people were "going into the practice of that sevenfold abomination, the slave-trade." While Maryland and Virginia agreed with the slaveholders of South Carolina and Georgia, against taxing exports, the products of slave labor, and were opposed to navigation laws for the encouragement of the shipping interest, they were opposed—it is hardly uncharitable to believe, for the twofold reason that they did not need foreign slaves, and were themselves engaged in the domestic slave-traffic—to the reopening and continuance of the African slave-trade. Consequently the slaveholding class was not a unit in supporting the report of the Committee of Detail.

That report, dictated by the Carolinas and Georgia, deeply aroused the feelings of delegates from the free States. Mr. King of Massachusetts took the earliest opportunity to denounce "the admission of slaves" into the basis of apportionment. He stated that by the report of the committee "the importation of slaves could not be prohibited, and exports could not be taxed"; that "there was so much inequality and unreasonableness in all this that the people of the North could never be reconciled to it. He never could agree to let slaves be imported without limitation, and then be represented in the national legislature. Either slaves should not be represented, or exports should be taxable."

Gouverneur Morris followed in an eloquent denunciation of slavery, emphatically declaring that "it was a nefarious institution; it was the curse of Heaven on the States where it prevailed." "Upon what principle is it," he asked, "that the slaves shall be computed in the representation? Are they

men? Then make them citizens, and let them vote. Are they property? Why, then, is no other property included? The houses in this city are worth more than all the wretched slaves that cover the rice-swamps of South Carolina." He declared that the inhabitants of the South, who went to the coast of Africa, and, in defiance of the sacred laws of humanity, tore away their fellow-creatures, and damned them to the most cruel bondage, had more power than the citizens of the North, who viewed with horror a practice so nefarious. He added "that domestic slavery is the most prominent feature in the aristocratic countenance of the proposed Constitution. The vassalage of the poor has ever been the favorite offspring of the aristocracy. And what is the proposed compensation to the Northern States for a sacrifice of every principle of right, every impulse of humanity? They are to bind themselves to march their militia, for the defence of the Southern States, against those very slaves. The Southern States are not to be restrained from importing fresh supplies of wretched Africans at once to increase the danger of attack and the difficulty of defence; nay, they are to be encouraged to it by having their votes in the national government increased in proportion, and at the same time to have their slaves and exports exempt from all contributions to the public service." He then emphatically avowed that he would "sooner submit himself to a tax for paying for all the slaves in the United States than to saddle posterity with such a constitution." He closed his speech by moving to confine the basis of representation to free inhabitants.

Roger Sherman opposed the motion; and, in doing it, made the very extraordinary declaration, for a New England man, that he "did not regard the admission of negroes as liable to such insuperable objections." Charles Pinckney, in reply to Mr. Morris, asserted that he could demonstrate that the fisheries and the Western frontiers were more burdensome than the slaves. Mr. Morris's motion was rejected, New Jersey alone voting for it.

When the clause came up forbidding any restrictions on the importation of slaves, Luther Martin of Maryland moved an

amendment, allowing such importation to be taxed. He stated that, as five slaves were equal to three freemen, the permission to import them was an encouragement of the slave-trade. "Slaves," he said, "weakened the Union which other parts are bound to protect. The privilege of importing them is, therefore, unreasonable. Such a feature in the Constitution is inconsistent with the principles of the Revolution, and dishonorable to the American character."

Mr. Rutledge, chairman of the committee, declared that he "did not see how this section would encourage the importation of slaves." In reply to the assertion that the Union was to protect the slaves, he said that he would "readily exempt the other States from every obligation to protect the South." He averred that "religion and humanity have nothing to do with this question. Interest alone is the governing principle with nations. The true question is, whether the Southern States shall or shall not be parties to the Union." Thus the issue was distinctly made by the chairman of the Committee of Detail, that the Southern States would enter the Union only on the condition that the African slave-trade should be continued. Appealing to commercial cupidity, he said that, if the Northern States consulted their own interest, they would not oppose the increase of slaves, because it would increase the commodities of which they would become the carriers. Nor was the appeal without effect.

Mr. Ellsworth, a member of the committee, immediately avowed himself in favor of the provision as it stood. "Let every State," he said, "import what it pleases. The morality or wisdom of slavery are considerations belonging to the States. What enriches a part enriches the whole, and the States are the best judges of their particular interests. The old confederation had not meddled with this point; and he did not see any greater necessity for bringing it into the policy of the new one."

Charles Pinckney, speaking for the slaveholding class, emphatically asserted: "South Carolina can never receive the plan, if it prohibits the slave-trade. In every proposed extension of the powers of Congress, that State has expressly and



watchfully excepted the power of meddling with the importation of negroes."

George Mason of Virginia strongly denounced the slave-trade, laying the blame of it on the avarice of British merchants, and lamenting that his Eastern brothers had from the lust of gain embarked in the traffic. "Slavery," he said, "discourages arts and manufactures. The poor despise labor when performed by slaves. It prevents the emigration of whites, who really enrich and strengthen the country. It produces the most pernicious effects on manners, — every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. It brings the judgment of Heaven on a country. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, Providence punishes national sins by national calamities." He then avowed that he held it essential in every point of view that the general government should have power to prevent the increase of slavery.

Mr. Ellsworth thought that, if the question was to be viewed in a moral light, the convention should go further, and free those already in the country. In Maryland and Virginia it was cheaper to raise than to import; but in the sickly rice-swamps, he coldly said, foreign importation was necessary, and it would be unjust to South Carolina and Georgia to prohibit their importation. "Let us not," he said, "intermeddle. As population increases, poor laborers will be so plenty as to render slaves useless. Slavery in time will not be a speck in our country."

Mr. Sherman joined Mr. Ellsworth in allowing the clause as reported by the committee to stand. Charles C. Pinckney avowed that "South Carolina and Georgia cannot do without slaves. As to Virginia, she will gain by stopping importation. Her slaves will rise in value, and she has more than she wants. It would be unfair to ask South Carolina and Georgia to confederate on such unequal terms." The importation of slaves, he maintained, would be for the benefit of the whole Union. The more slaves, the more produce; the greater carrying trade, the more consumption, the more revenue. The delegation from South Carolina united in the emphatic declaration that, if the slave-trade was prohibited, South Carolina would not come into



the Union. Mr. Baldwin of Georgia, too, avowed that his State would not confederate unless she were allowed to import slaves ; and Mr. Williamson joined in expressing the opinion that, if South Carolina and Georgia were not allowed to import slaves, they would not become members of the Union. Mr. Wilson of Pennsylvania suggested that, "if negroes were the only imports not subject to a duty, such an exception would amount to a bounty." Gerry of Massachusetts and Langdon of New Hampshire would give no sanction whatever to the slave-trade.

Mr. King thought the exemption of slaves from duty, while every other import was subject to it, was an inequality that could not fail to strike the commercial sagacity of the Northern and Middle States. Mr. Charles Pinckney hastened to move a recommitment, with a view to a tax on slaves equal to a tax imposed on other imports. His motion was seconded by Mr. Rutledge, his colleague. It was proposed by Gouverneur Morris that the clauses relating to navigation laws and taxation on exports should be referred, making the significant and pregnant suggestion that "these things may form a *bargain* between the Northern and Southern States." The commitment was supported by Mr. Randolph, who avowed that he would rather risk the Constitution than support the clause as it stood. Mr. Sherman said that a tax on slaves implied that they were property ; and Mr. Ellsworth continued to support the article as reported by the committee. The motion to commit prevailed, and the matter was referred to a committee of one from each State. This committee made "a bargain," and reported it. The prohibition of export duties was retained, the restriction of the enactment of navigation laws was stricken out, and the slave-trade permitted till 1800, subject to the imposition of such a duty on slaves as Congress might determine.

This report was supported by Mr. Williamson and Mr. Gorham ; but the tax was objected to by Mr. Sherman, because it implied that slaves were property, and because the tax was too small to discourage importation. But Mr. Gorham replied that the tax should be regarded, not as implying that men were property, but as a discouragement to their importation. Mr.

Madison "thought it wrong to admit into the Constitution the idea that there could be property in man," and a change was therefore made in the phraseology to remove that objection.

Mr. Charles C. Pinckney moved to extend the time of the slave-trade from 1800 to 1808. This motion was seconded by Mr. Gorham of Massachusetts, and was carried by the votes of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Georgia, and South Carolina; against the votes of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Virginia. The restriction on the enactment of navigation laws was then stricken out; and Charles C. Pinckney, Mr. Butler, and Mr. Rutledge gave the vote of South Carolina in favor of striking out the restrictions, because of the liberal conduct of the Eastern States in giving them twenty years of extension to the slave-trade.

Thus New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut stand on the record as parties to a dishonorable and humiliating "bargain," by which, for a mere commercial consideration,—the removal of all restriction on Congress to enact navigation laws,—they gave twenty years to the African slave-traffic, unrestrained by national legislation. Opposition to giving Congress power to encourage, develop, and protect the commercial and navigating interest of the nation sprung from the narrowness, jealousy, and all-pervading selfishness of slaveholding society. Statesmanship demanded that such restrictions should be excluded from the organic law of a free and commercial nation. Duty to their own section, to their whole country, required that the delegates from New England should resist the incorporation of that plantation policy into the Constitution they were framing for a continental empire. But it will ever be a matter of regret, as well as of reproach, that those New England States achieved their success by a surrender of principles in accord alike with the dictates of humanity and the divine precepts of the Christian religion. And, as men correctly apprehend the true nature of that "bargain," the real significance and true value of Mr. Pinckney's damaging words of praise will be appreciated, when he declared that "he had had prejudices against the Eastern States before he came here; but he would acknowledge that he had found them as

liberal and candid as any men whatever." Nor will the record seem any more flattering because other extreme Southern men joined in that commendation.

It will be remembered that when the Committee of Detail was appointed, to which were referred the results then reached by the convention, Charles C. Pinckney rose and reminded the body that, if the committee failed to insert some provision against the abolition of slavery, he should be bound by the duty he owed South Carolina to vote against its report. At that time slavery had disappeared, or was disappearing, in the seven Northern States, where it never had to any great extent existed; but there were more than half a million of slaves in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. While many of the most eminent men of those States, especially of Virginia, believed slavery to be in every form an evil, and desired the inauguration of a system of emancipation; the body of the people, influenced by pecuniary interests, and the pride, passion, and prejudices of race, were in favor of its continuance. Statesmen, quick to discover the drift of public sentiment, were then beginning to look to the slaveholding interest as an element of political power. In the work of obtaining securities for slavery the able statesmen South Carolina sent to the convention took the lead. She could enter no union, they said, accept no constitution, unless slaves should enter into the basis of representation, the slave-trade be continued, and provision be made for the rendition of slaves escaping from their masters.

But the Committee of Detail reported no provision for the rendition of fugitive slaves. When the article came under consideration providing that the citizens of each State should be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of the citizens of the several States, Mr. Pinckney again demanded a provision "in favor of property in slaves." The article, however, was adopted without any such clause.

When the article respecting fugitives from justice escaping from one State into another came up for consideration, Mr. Butler, on behalf of South Carolina, moved to require "fugitive slaves and servants to be delivered up like criminals."



This amendment was objected to by Mr. Wilson, for the inconsequential reason that it would require the delivery to be made at the public expense ; while Mr. Sherman remarked, with little more appreciation of the magnitude of the question involved, that he saw " no more propriety in the public seizing and surrendering a servant than a horse." Mr. Butler then withdrew his amendment, for the purpose of putting it in a new form. But the next day, the 29th of August, he introduced it, and it was agreed to without a division.

This provision was inserted in the Constitution for the express purpose of securing what did not exist under the Articles of Confederation, — the rendition of slaves escaping from one State into another. General Pinckney, the exponent of that class of slaveholders who were in favor of the perpetuity of the slavery of the African race, demanded this provision as a condition precedent to the adoption of the Constitution ; and the convention yielded. In the convention of South Carolina for its ratification General Pinckney emphatically declared : " We have a right to recover our slaves in whatever part of America they may take refuge. In short, considering all circumstances, we have made the best terms for the security of this species of property it was in our power to make. We would have made better, if we could ; but, on the whole, I do not think them bad." It was stated by Mr. Madison, in the convention of Virginia, that " this clause was expressly inserted to enable owners of slaves to reclaim them." It was stated, too, in the North Carolina Convention, by Mr. Iredell, afterward judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, that, though the word " slave " was not mentioned, owing to the peculiar scruples of Northern delegates on the subject of slavery, the article was inserted to enable masters to recover their slaves escaping into other States.

Thus was incorporated into the Constitution that fearful and far-reaching provision which actually transformed the whole territory of the Republic into one vast hunting-ground, in which brutal men — such as slavery alone can make — might range at pleasure, and, under cover of the cruel and inhuman statutes it authorized, hunt, seize, and return to bondage men



and women whose only crimes were a desire to be free and a heroism to dare the perils of escape for that priceless boon ; while their friends, and the friends of justice and humanity, could only look on, impotent for help, blushing at their country's degradation, and sympathizing, though vainly, with its victims. The only palliation to be urged for thus yielding to the wicked demands and the imperious threats of slave-masters was the weakness of faith and courage naturally arising from the perils menacing the country, and the too confident expectation that slavery was to be but a temporary system, soon to pass away.

From the opening of the War of the Revolution to the meeting of the convention, the supporters of slavery had moved with hesitating step. The clash of arms, and the enunciation of the primal truth of human rights in the Declaration of Independence, in the constitutions of several of the States, and by eminent statesmen and philanthropists, threatened the security and perpetuity of the system. Action against the slave-trade, emancipation in several of the Northern States, the permission of Virginia to humane masters to give freedom to their slaves, the plan devised, but not adopted, for gradual emancipation in Virginia by Thomas Jefferson and George Wythe, the ordinance inhibiting slavery in the vast territory northwest of the Ohio, showed the tendencies of the age, weakened the confidence of slaveholders in the stability of their system, while at the same time they begot a too credulous expectation among the friends of freedom of its speedy downfall.

But the incorporation of the fatal concessions to slavery into the fundamental law of the nation breathed into the system new life, and inspired new hope in those desirous of its indefinite perpetuation. Little did the men of that convention comprehend the full significance of their action in the added vitality which these concessions imparted to the slave system. Little did they anticipate the stimulus which would be given to it by a stable government, the opening of fresh territory, and the large increase of the cotton culture. Little did they foresee the wonderful growth and expansion of a sys-

tem that was to poison the fountain of national life and diffuse its pestiferous influences throughout the land. Nor did they at all realize that even then they were bowing before a new-born power, which would for more than two generations pervert the government from the very purposes for which they were establishing it, until at last it should perish in the vain attempt to compass its overthrow.

## CHAPTER V.

PROPOSED TAX ON SLAVES. — FIRST SLAVERY DEBATES IN CONGRESS. — PETITIONS FOR EMANCIPATION. — POWERS OF THE GOVERNMENT DEFINED.

Meeting of Congress. — Proposition to tax Slaves Imported. — Debate on the Amendment. — Defeat of the Proposition. — Petitions for Emancipation. — Franklin's Memorial. — Excited Debate. — Special Committee. — Report of the Committee. — Southern Members defend Slavery and the Slave-trade. — Tone of the Debate. — Powers of Congress defined and declared. — Mr. Mifflin's Petition. — Right of Petition violated.

THE first Congress under the Constitution met in the city of New York, in March, 1789; though a quorum did not appear until the 6th of April. It at once addressed itself to the pressing duty of organizing the new government, and of providing means for its support. When the bill imposing a duty on imports was under consideration in the House of Representatives, Mr. Parker of Virginia moved an amendment, imposing a duty of ten dollars on every slave imported. This amendment excited much interest, especially among the members from South Carolina and Georgia. Mr. Smith, of the former State, hastened to express the hope "that such an important and serious proposition would not be hastily adopted"; and he averred that "no one topic had been yet introduced so important to South Carolina and the welfare of the Union."

Roger Sherman of Connecticut expressed his approval of "the object of the motion, but did not think it a fit subject to be embraced in this bill. He could not reconcile himself to the insertion of human beings as a subject of import among goods, wares, and merchandise." He then earnestly urged the withdrawal of the amendment, and suggested that it might afterward be introduced as an independent proposition.

Mr. Jackson of Georgia declared that he was "not surprised, however others might be, at the quarter whence this motion came. Virginia, an old settled State, has her complement of slaves, and, the natural increase being sufficient for her purpose, she was careless of recruiting her numbers by importation. But gentlemen ought to let their neighbors get supplied before they imposed such a burden." He expressed his confidence that, on account of the unsuitableness of the motion to the business in hand, it would be withdrawn. Alluding petulantly to the "white slaves" "imported from all the jails of Europe," he contended that they should be "equally taxed" with the African, and that such a course would be equally constitutional and proper.

To the suggestion of withdrawing the amendment, Mr. Parker — who had, on moving it, expressed his regret that the Constitution prevented Congress from prohibiting altogether the importation of slaves — declared that, "having introduced the motion on mature reflection, he did not like to withdraw it." He proceeded further, and expressed the hope that "Congress would do all in their power to restore to human nature its inherent privileges; to wipe off, if possible, the stigma under which America labored; to do away the inconsistency in our principles justly charged upon us; and to show by our actions the purer beneficence of the doctrine held out to the world in our Declaration of Independence."

Mr. Sherman again avowed his opposition to the amendment, as it was inconsistent with the principle of the bill, which was to raise revenue, while the principle of the amendment was to correct a moral evil. Fisher Ames of Massachusetts expressed his detestation of "slavery from his soul; but he had some doubts whether imposing a duty on such importation would not have an appearance of countenancing the practice."

Mr. Jackson further opposed the amendment. "It is," he said, "the fashion of the day to favor the liberty of slaves. I believe that they are better off as they are, and better off than they were in Africa. Experience has shown that liberated slaves will not work for a living." He then asked if Virginia would free her negroes, and declared that "when the



practice comes to be tried, then the sound of liberty will lose those charms which make it grateful to the ravished ear."

The amendment was supported by Mr. Bland of Virginia, who expressed the wish that slavery had never been introduced into America, and was willing to join in any measure to prevent its extending further. Mr. Madison said that the clause in the Constitution allowing a tax was inserted, he believed, "for the purpose of enabling Congress to give some testimony of the sense of America with respect to the African trade. By expressing a national disapprobation of that trade, it is to be hoped we may destroy it, and so save ourselves from reproaches and our posterity from the imbecility ever attendant upon a country filled with slaves. This is as much the interest of Carolina and Georgia as of any other State. Every addition they receive to their number of slaves tends to weakness and renders them less capable of self-defence. In case of hostility with other nations, their slave population will be a means, not of repelling invasion, but of inviting attack. It is the duty of the general government to protect every part of the Union against danger, as well internal as external. Everything, therefore, which tends to increase this danger, though it might be a local affair, yet, if it involves national expense or safety, becomes of concern to any part of the Union, and a proper subject for the consideration of those charged with the general administration of the government."

These views of Mr. Madison were humane, just, comprehensive, and statesmanlike. Had they been generally entertained and adhered to by Southern statesmen, and accepted by the Southern people, the amelioration, restriction, and extinction of slavery, rather than its expansion and perpetuation, would have been their chosen policy. But widely differing counsels prevailed. Not only the nation, indeed, but Mr. Madison himself, and the class of Southern men he represented, failed to employ the powers here enunciated in behalf of freedom and humanity, or to maintain the humane sentiments here avowed. They soon yielded to the force of circumstances, for which they had not calculated, and which they seemed powerless to control; and became, if not the advo-

cates, the consenting witnesses to the aggressive encroachments and assaults on human rights. They had not anticipated and were not prepared for the soon disclosed fact, that to the ordinary motives for the continued existence of slavery there were to be added the stimulus of the greatly increased industries developed and fostered by the new government. Nor had they then realized how exacting and tyrannous the slave-masters, flushed with their successes in the convention, would soon become, and with what tenacity and persistency they would press the advantages they then gained. They had faint conceptions of the concessions made in the Constitution to the slave interest. For from the time they were made the demands of consistency and the logic of those concessions were always against them. Consenting to the great wrong, they lost too much of their moral power. Leaving the rock of principle, they found no foothold on the shifting sands of expediency and compromise, on which they could stand against the compact forces of the Slave Power, however vile and desperate its cause might be. Ever after these fatal concessions in the Constitution the nation seemed like a strong man struggling in toils and meshes; or, rather, like the giant shorn of his locks, sleeping in the lap of the wanton who had lured him to dishonor, if not to destruction.

At the suggestion of Mr. Madison Mr. Parker withdrew his amendment, with the understanding that it should be afterward brought up as a distinct measure. The subject was subsequently referred to a committee, of which he was made chairman. He reported a bill which was referred to the next session; but it was never acted upon. The men who extorted from the framers of the Constitution the permission to continue the slave-trade for twenty years were in no mood to allow a tax of ten dollars on every imported African. They were not only jealous of any action on the part of the Federal government, but they determined to secure the full benefits of the traffic in human flesh.

Within one year after the organization of the first Congress, memorials were presented deploring the evils of slavery and praying for immediate action for their abatement. They re-

vealed a deep sense of justice, a high regard for the rights of man, and a profound recognition of the claims of morality and religion. On the 11th of February, 1790, a petition was presented from the Quakers to the House of Representatives. The memorialists alluded to the fact that "the same religious society addressed, in 1783, the then Congress on the same subject; which body, though the Christian rectitude of the concern was by the delegates generally acknowledged, yet, not being vested with the powers of legislation, declined" acting on the subject. They say: "As professors of faith in that ever-blessed, all-perfect Lawgiver, whose injunction remains of undiminished obligation,—‘Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them’; and firmly believing that unfeigned righteousness in public as well as private citizens is the only sure ground of hope of the divine blessing; . . . we feel it incumbent on us, as a religious body, to attempt to excite your attention to the affecting subject," and induce you to "exert your upright endeavors to the full extent of your power." They expressed the confident expectation that the exercise of that power "must produce the abolition of the slave-trade."

Mr. Hartley of Pennsylvania moved that a petition coming from "so numerous and respectable a part of the community" should be referred to a committee. To this motion Mr. Smith of South Carolina objected; saying, however respectable the petitioners were, there were others, equally respectable, opposed to their object. Mr. Parker of Virginia expressed his pleasure that "so many were attending to matters of such momentous concern to the future happiness and prosperity of the people." Mr. Madison thought it proper to receive and consider the petition, "because, if there is anything within the Federal authority to restrain such violation of the rights of nature and of mankind, it should be done." But Mr. Stone of Maryland declared it "unfortunate that religious sects seemed to imagine that they understood the rights of human nature better than all the world besides"; and Mr. Burke of South Carolina, referring contemptuously to some Quakers present, said, "The men in the galleries were meddling with



what did not belong to them ; and, though he had great respect for the Quakers, he did not think they had more virtue and religion than many others, perhaps not so much as some others."

Mr. Jackson of Georgia, an Englishman by birth, an officer in the Revolutionary army, and a delegate to the convention which framed the Constitution, wanted "to know if the whole morality of the world is confined to the Quakers? Do they understand the rights of mankind and the disposition of mankind better than others? The Saviour had more benevolence and commiseration than they pretend to have, and he admitted slavery." Mr. Gerry maintained the right of petition, and defended the action of the Society of Friends, who wished to see measures pursued by every nation to wipe off the indelible stain brought upon all who were concerned in it. The memorial was finally laid upon the table, and thus ended the first debate on antislavery petitions in Congress.

On the 12th of February, 1790, a memorial was presented from the "Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery" signed and said to have been written by Franklin. As this illustrious citizen died soon afterward, the American people are justified in regarding it as the last and wisest of the many sage counsels bequeathed by him to his countrymen. After alluding to the origin, objects, and general constituency of the society, being "of various religious denominations," and to the gratifying circumstance that similar associations were forming at home and abroad, the memorial proceeds: "That mankind are all formed by the same Almighty Being, alike objects of his care and equally designed for the enjoyment of happiness, the Christian religion teaches us to believe, and the political creed of Americans fully coincides with that position." It quotes, too, from the preamble of the Constitution, as indicating one of the objects of that instrument for promoting "the welfare and securing the blessings of liberty to the people of the United States," which "blessings of liberty," it declares, "ought rightfully to be administered without distinction of color." "From a persuasion, too," it continues, "that equal liberty was originally the portion and is still the birthright of all



men, we earnestly entreat your serious attention to the subject of slavery ; that you will be pleased to countenance the restoration to liberty of those unhappy men who, alone in this land of freedom, are degraded to perpetual bondage, and who, amidst the general joy of surrounding freemen, are groaning in servile subjection ; that you will devise means for removing this inconsistency from the character of the American people ; . . . and that you will step to the very verge of power vested in you for discouraging every species of traffic in the persons of our fellow-men."

The memorial of the preceding day was called up, and both were made the subject of an able and exciting debate. Mr. Tucker of South Carolina was "surprised to see another memorial upon the same subject, and that signed by a man who ought to have known the Constitution better." The argument, so often repeated since, was urged, that the movement would aggravate the very evil it was sought to ameliorate and remove, by buoying up the slave with hopes which must be disappointed, and necessitating a severity which would not otherwise be required. He parried the religious argument of the memorial by urging the indorsement of the Southern clergy, who, he said, did not condemn either slavery or the slave-trade. This damaging reference was only too well deserved, and too significant of their subsequent and disastrous course, even up to and throughout the Rebellion. With few exceptions, they failed as religious teachers of educating the people up to the standard of a scriptural morality, shirked the duties imposed upon them by the claims of patriotism, humanity, and religion, betrayed their sacred trust, and proved recreant alike to the claims of benevolence and the Word of God. The weapons they should have pointed against the cruel and wicked system they turned in its defence. Omniscience alone can estimate how much of the subsequent guilt, suffering, and even the destruction of the South was due to their influence who thus early became the blind leaders of the blind. There were not wanting, likewise, at that early date, those who urged the same arguments on which so many changes have been rung since, — the same deprecatory allusions to the

danger of discussion, the same reminders of the compromises on which alone the Union was or could have been based. Mr. Baldwin of Georgia, a native of Connecticut, and one of the framers of the Constitution, reminded members that this was "a subject of a most delicate nature"; that in the convention "the Southern States were so tender upon this point that they had wellnigh broken up without coming to any determination." It was emphatically declared by Mr. Smith of South Carolina, that the Southern "States would never have entered the Confederation unless their property had been guaranteed to them." "When we entered into this Confederacy," he said, "we did it from political and not from moral motives. And I don't think my constituents want to learn morals from the petitioners. I don't believe they want improvement in their moral systems. If they do, they can learn it at home."

On the other hand, Mr. Scott of Pennsylvania defended the memorialists, and condemned in strong and unequivocal language the slave traffic. "I look upon the slave-trade," he said, "to be one of the most abominable things on earth; and, if there were neither God nor Devil, I should oppose it on principles of humanity and the law of humanity. I cannot, for my part, conceive how any person can be said to acquire property in another. Perhaps in our legislative capacity we can go no further than impose a duty of ten dollars. I do not know how far I might go if I was one of the judges of the United States, and these people were to come before me and claim their emancipation; but I am sure I would go as far as I could."

To these humane and noble utterances Mr. Jackson of Georgia replied: "If that gentleman is guided by religion, he will find that it is not against it. He will see, from Genesis to Revelation, the current setting strong the other way." In reply to his declaration, that if he were a judge he would go as far as he could in emancipating the people, he said: "I believe that his judgment would be of short duration in Georgia; perhaps even the existence of such a judge would be of short duration."

The memorials were referred to a select committee, consisting of Foster of New Hampshire, Gerry of Massachusetts, Huntington of Connecticut, Lawrence of New York, Sinickson of New Jersey, Hartley of Pennsylvania, and Parker of Virginia. From this committee Mr. Hartley made a report, manifestly well considered and carefully drawn up. In it the committee say that, from the nature of the matters contained in the memorials, they were induced to examine the powers vested in Congress under the present Constitution. Their conclusion was that the general government was prohibited from interfering with the slave-trade until the year 1808, that it was prohibited from interfering with the emancipation of slaves within the States, and that it had no right to interfere with the internal regulations of particular States. But they declared that Congress had power, if deemed advisable, to lay a tax of ten dollars on each slave imported ; that it had the power to interdict the trade for foreign supply, and that it might regulate the home traffic in the interests of humanity ; and that it might prohibit foreigners from fitting out vessels in American ports. The committee closed by informing the memorialists that, so far as Congress could do it constitutionally, it would aim to promote their humane objects "on the principles of justice, humanity, and good policy."

A report, however, so guarded and carefully restrained by the limitations of the Constitution, so moderate in tone and temper, was received with marked demonstrations of hostility by the representatives of the slaveholding class, and its consideration postponed for a week. When it was taken up, Mr. Smith of South Carolina moved to "negative the whole report." But it was taken up by paragraphs, and the same line of argument, already sketched, was pursued. The greatest violence and impatience, with denunciation and threats, came from South Carolina and Georgia, — then, as since, the self-constituted guardians and defenders of Southern interests and Southern honor. They applied the same epithets to the Quakers then which their successors have so freely used in regard to all antislavery reformers. They stigmatized



them, as they have Christians and philanthropists since, as hypocritical pretenders to a sanctity they did not possess, as factious intermeddlers with what did not concern them. They declared the compromises of the Constitution to be the only conditions on which the Union could be preserved; and they sternly demanded that freedom of discussion on the subject of slavery should not be tolerated.

Among the champions of slavery, the most able and conspicuous, as well as rancorous and violent, were Smith, Tucker, and Burke of South Carolina, and Jackson and Baldwin of Georgia. Mr. Smith made an elaborate defence of slavery and the slave-trade on historical, scriptural, and humanitarian grounds. He denied the "horrors of the Middle Passage," and contended that slaves imported from Africa were benefited by the change, as they were here saved from a worse fate which awaited them in their native land. Freedom, however, was not without its true and steady defenders, — men who enunciated with great boldness and force the fundamental principles, the primal truths, not only of natural rights and obligation, but of Christian morality and duty. Trammelled, indeed, by those compromises which have always hampered the advocates of human rights under the Constitution, even the most conscientious and outspoken, they yet boldly denounced the system which had no sanction in reason or revelation. The most distinguished of these advocates were Vin- ing of Delaware, and Scott and Boudinot of Pennsylvania.

This great and pregnant debate was closed on the 23d of March, when a substitute for the report was adopted in committee of the whole. On the suggestion of Mr. Madison, who desired to quiet the fears of the South, by showing that Congress claimed no power to prohibit the slave-trade till 1808, and no power to abolish slavery at all, the House, by a vote of twenty-nine to twenty-five, entered on the journal the report of the committee, and also the report of the committee of the whole, as amendments to that report. The amendments reported by the committee of the whole stood, therefore, as the judgment of the House.

By these resolutions the House of Representatives declared



that the importation of such persons as any of the States should admit could not be prohibited by Congress before 1808 ; that Congress had no power to interfere with emancipation or the treatment of slaves in the States ; but that it had authority to restrain the citizens of the United States from carrying on the slave-trade to supply foreigners with slaves, and that it had the power to make regulations for the humane treatment, on their passage, of slaves imported by citizens into States admitting such importations. Though these resolutions had not the authority of a legislative enactment, yet in all the subsequent conflicts growing out of the slavery question the doctrines therein embodied have been generally recognized as the true exposition of the Constitution, and of the powers of Congress touching that matter.

This debate on slavery was strikingly characteristic and significant. It clearly revealed in tone and temper, matter and manner, thought and language, that difference between the friends of freedom and the supporters of slavery, which has ever marked discussions growing out of their diversity of interests, views, feelings, and purposes. On the one side the debate was grave, dignified, and regardful of the rights of man and the authority of God ; on the other, it was flippant, contemptuous, and indifferent alike to the claims of humanity, the courtesies of debate, and the binding obligations of a Christian morality.

The abolition societies of Pennsylvania, New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Virginia, in 1791, presented memorials calling upon Congress to exercise those powers which the House of Representatives had declared that Congress possessed, in the resolutions of the committee of the whole, which had been entered upon the journal. These memorials were referred to a special committee of which Mr. Benson of New York was made chairman. No action was taken by the committee. At the next session other memorials of a similar character were presented. But they were permitted to lie without action or reference.

In November, 1792, Mr. Ames presented a petition from Warner Mifflin, a Quaker gentleman of Delaware, setting forth

the injustice of slavery and the wrongs of the slave. Two days afterward Mr. Steele of North Carolina called attention to the petition, and moved that it be taken from the table and returned to the petitioner, and that the record of its reception be erased. Smith of South Carolina denounced the petition as "the mere rant and rhapsody of a meddling fanatic, interlarded with texts of Scripture." He declared the real object of the petition to be to "create disunion among the States and to excite the most horrible insurrections." Declaring that petitions of that character were not calculated to ameliorate the condition of the slaves, but to excite a spirit of restlessness, which made greater securities necessary, he called upon the House to sustain the motion, and thus convince "this troublesome enthusiast, and others who might be disposed to communicate their ravings and wild effusions, that they would meet the treatment they justly deserve." Mr. Ames disapproved the object of the petitioners; but defended the general right of petition, and justified, on that ground, his presentation of the memorial. The House sustained the motion to return the memorial to the petitioner; and Mr. Steele then withdrew his motion to erase the record of its reception from the journal. This high-handed measure was a clear and palpable violation of the constitutional right of petition, a gross indignity to the petitioner, and an insult to a free people.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT OF 1793. — PROPOSED AMENDMENTS.

Bill for the Rendition of Fugitive Slaves. — Bill passed the Senate, — passed the House. — Petition of Free Colored Men to be protected against it. — Exciting Debate. — Memorial of Colored Men of Philadelphia. — Exciting and Violent Debate. — Disunion threatened by Mr. Rutledge. — Action of the House. — Further Legislation demanded. — Mr. Pindall's Bill. — Amendment by Mr. Rich. — Mr. Storrs' Amendment. — Debate on the Bill and Amendments. — Mr. Fuller's Amendments. — Bill passed the House, — passed the Senate, with Amendments. — House refused to take it up. — Mr. Wright's Resolution. — Bill reported by Judiciary Committee. — Debated. — Recommended to a Select Committee. — Reported, but not acted on.

By their persistency the statesmen representing the Slave Power secured from the framers of the Constitution the provision for the rendition of fugitive slaves. Having obtained the incorporation of this provision into the fundamental law, they early and eagerly sought its enforcement.

In the Senate, in November, 1792, Mr. Johnston of North Carolina, Mr. Cabot of Massachusetts, and Mr. Read of Delaware were appointed a committee for the consideration of matters relating to fugitives from justice, and slaves escaping from their masters. The committee reported a bill in December, and on the 28th of the same month it was recommitted, and Mr. Taylor of Virginia and Mr. Sherman of Connecticut were added to the committee. On the 3d of January, 1793, Mr. Johnston reported the original bill, with amendments. It was considered several days, and passed without a division. On the 4th of February the House proceeded to its consideration, and the next day it passed by a vote of 48 to 7. Thus this act, which gave the slave-masters and their agents summary power to seize, hold, and return to slavery their fugitive bondmen, passed the Senate without a dissenting voice; and

in the House there were found only seven members to record their votes against that dishonoring act, by authority of which so many inhuman and wicked deeds have been committed.

Under this Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 many arrests of persons alleged to have escaped from servitude were made, and much alarm among free persons of color was created. Many free negroes, especially in the States of Pennsylvania and Delaware, were kidnapped and sold into slavery. At the first session of the Fourth Congress a memorial was presented from the legislature of Delaware, asking the protection of the general government against this kidnapping. It was referred to the Committee on Commerce, which made a report asking for instructions.

In December, 1796, on motion of Mr. Swanwick of Pennsylvania, the report of the previous session was taken up for consideration. Mr. Coit of Connecticut, a member of the Committee of Commerce, thought the laws of the several States fully adequate without further provisions. He did not wish the United States to "intermeddle" in the case. To this Mr. Swanwick replied that the State laws were broken with impunity. He was for obliging masters of vessels when they took negroes on board to have certificates of their freedom. Mr. Murray of Maryland asked if the idea of preventing kidnapping meant the taking of "free negroes and selling them as slaves, or the taking of slaves and making them free?" To this question Mr. Swanwick replied that it was "intended to prevent both evils." Any action of Congress was opposed by Mr. Smith of South Carolina, because the matter was a municipal regulation, which should be left to the State legislatures. The House was reminded by Mr. Smith of New Jersey that negroes had in many instances been taken upon ships at night, and then carried to the West Indies and other parts of the world and sold; and that the existing State laws could not prevent that fraudulent practice.

Mr. Sitgreaves and Mr. Swanwick earnestly urged immediate action for the protection of unfortunate negroes and mulattoes exposed, by their color, to insult and injury. Mr. Smith of South Carolina feared that the "use of the word 'emanci-



pation' " by Mr. Swanwick would spread alarm through some of the States. He would drop the subject altogether. Mr. Nicholas of Virginia expressed the hope that the subject would not be dismissed; for if they of the Southern States "unfortunately held slaves, they ought not to contribute to make slaves of free men." After further debate the report was recommitted to the Committee on Commerce; and on the 18th of January, 1797, Mr. Swanwick, by the instructions of the committee, though against his own opinion, reported that it was not expedient to interfere with the existing laws of the States on that subject.

In January, 1797, Mr. Swanwick presented a petition from persons of African descent, natives of North Carolina, who had been emancipated and re-enslaved. These persons set forth that they had been liberated "under the hand and seal of conscientious masters," by authority of a law pronounced constitutional; that another law had been enacted under which men of "cruel disposition and void of principle" were seeking to re-enslave them; that they were reduced to the necessity of separating from their nearest and most tender connections, and of seeking refuge in other parts of the country, always liable to be seized and reduced to bondage again, under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act. "To you only," they say, "under God, can we apply, with any hope of effect, for redress of our grievances."

Mr. Swanwick desired that the petition should be referred to a select committee; but Mr. Blount of North Carolina hoped the petition would not be received. A committee on the Fugitive Slave Act had been appointed, and Mr. Thatcher of Massachusetts thought this petition should be referred to that committee. He asserted that they were free people, and had an undoubted right to petition and be heard. Mr. Swanwick animadverted on the atrocity of a reward of ten dollars offered for one of them if taken alive, and fifty dollars if found dead, and no questions to be asked. He denounced that "horrid reward," which gentlemen could not hear without a "shudder," as an encouragement to put an end to that man's life. Heath and Madison of Virginia were in favor of letting the petition

lie on the table ; but Mr. Rutherford of the same State favored the reference of the memorial to a committee, as the "great hardships" represented in the petition appealed closely to the nicest feelings of the heart, and he "hoped humanity would dictate a just decision." Mr. Gilbert of New Jersey thought the petition "laid claim to the humanity of the House"; but Mr. Smith of South Carolina was in favor of sealing it up and sending it back to the petitioners.

Mr. Thatcher said the Fugitive Slave Act had no authority over that set of men who claim the protection of that House, which ought "always to lean toward freedom." Though they could not give freedom to slaves, yet he hoped gentlemen would not refuse to lend their aid to secure freemen against tyrannical imposition. Mr. Varnum of Massachusetts said the petitioners had received injury under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act, as well as under the laws of North Carolina, and they had an undoubted right to the attention of the general government. If it should appear that they were free, and had received injuries under the Fugitive Slave Act, that Act ought to be amended. Mr. Kitchell of New Jersey maintained that the question was not whether they were or were not slaves, but whether a committee should inquire into the improper enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act in their case. But the House refused to receive the petition, thirty-three voting for it and fifty against it.

In December, 1799, Robert Waln of Pennsylvania presented a petition from colored men in Philadelphia, praying for the revision of the Fugitive Slave Act and the laws relative to the slave-trade, and for the adoption of such measures as should in the course of time emancipate their brethren. Its reference was earnestly opposed by Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina, who contemptuously observed that the gentlemen who formerly came forward with their petitions had now put them into the hands of the "black gentlemen." These petitioners reminded the House that black people were in slavery. He "thanked God that they were ; if they were not, dreadful would be the consequences." Mr. Smilie of Pennsylvania said that these colored people were "a part of the human species,

equally capable of suffering and enjoying, equally the objects of attention, and they had a claim to be heard."

Harrison Gray Otis had never seen a petition presented under a more dangerous aspect; and he opposed the reference. Henry Lee of Virginia, father of Robert E. Lee, the rebel general, would have the petition returned to the gentleman who presented it, "as Congress had no power over slavery but to protect it." Mr. Brown of Rhode Island hoped that Northern men would see the impropriety of encouraging slaves to come from Southern States to "become thieves and vagabonds." He was not a slaveholder, but he considered "slaves as much property as a farm or a ship." John Randolph, who had just entered Congress, desired that the action of the House should be so decided as to deter persons from petitioning on that subject thereafter; and Mr. Christie of Maryland hoped the petition would go "under the table, rather than on it." He was in favor of taking up the Fugitive Act, and, instead of weakening it, "making it stronger." Robert Goodloe Harper thought the temper of revolt was more perceptible among the slaves; and Mr. Jones of Georgia hoped the petition would be treated with "the contempt it merited, and thrown under the table."

In the course of the debate Mr. Thatcher fitly characterized the remarks of his colleague, Mr. Otis, "as pitiful, mean, virulent." Mr. Edmond of Connecticut said it was unjust in the House, instead of giving a patient attention, to treat the complaints of the petitioners with "an inattention that passion alone could dictate." It was then proposed by Mr. Goode of Virginia that the petition should receive the pointed disapprobation of the House. To this proposition Mr. Thatcher replied that this was the first time he had ever known a petition, or a part of a petition, to receive the marked disapprobation of the House. If a petition in favor of objects so worthy was not heard, it would be "a national indignity." Mr. Rutledge, perhaps the ablest, certainly the most devoted and outspoken of the champions of the slaveholding interest, emphatically proclaimed that the abolition of slavery would never take place. "There is," he said, "one alternative which



will save us from it, — but that alternative I deprecate very much, — that is, that we are able to take care of ourselves; and, if driven to it, we will take care of ourselves.” The House then resolved that those parts of the petition praying Congress to legislate on subjects from which the government is precluded by the Constitution had a tendency to create disquiet and jealousy, and ought therefore to receive no countenance or encouragement. This resolution received the votes of eighty-five members, the inflexible Thatcher alone voting in the negative.

This hesitating and timid action seems a lame and impotent conclusion of a debate so imbued with the spirit of humanity, justice, and freedom on the one part, though revealing on the other an utter disregard of the rights of man and the claims of Christian morality. But is it, after all, when viewed in the light of the compromises of the Constitution, a matter of surprise? The concessions then made were, and ever have been, the weak and vulnerable points in all the conflicts between freedom and oppression. The framers of the fundamental law, avoiding the name of slavery, admitted into that instrument “the guilty fantasy that man can hold property in man.” The slaveholders in their struggles ever claimed that “it was so nominated in the bond,” and persistently demanded their “pound of flesh.” And so the integrity, honor, and even the Christianity of the nation were invoked, — and too often successfully, — to sanction the schemes of inhumanity and the injustice of men determined to make the most of advantages surrendered by those fatal concessions.

Severe as were the provisions of this act, complaints were continually made by slave-masters that it did not afford adequate facilities for the recapture of their escaped slaves. More stringent provisions and a more rigid enforcement of the law were still demanded.

In the House, in December, 1817, Mr. Pindall of Virginia, Mr. Beecher of Ohio, and Mr. Anderson of Kentucky were appointed a committee to devise more effectual means for the reclamation of fugitive slaves. A bill for this purpose was reported; and the House, on the 26th of January, 1818, pro-



ceeded to its consideration. Its provisions were explained by the chairman of the committee. It was moved by Mr. Rich of Vermont so to amend it as to prevent the transportation of any person claimed as a slave without taking such person before a court of record and furnishing sufficient proof that such person was a slave, and the property of the person attempting to remove him, under a penalty of ten thousand dollars. Mr. Storrs of New York moved to amend the bill by substituting, in lieu of the amendment of Mr. Rich, a new section, providing that, if any person, without a colorable claim, should procure a certificate or warrant to arrest or transport any person not held as a slave, he should himself be punished by imprisonment not exceeding fifteen years, or by fine not exceeding five thousand dollars. Mr. Pindall united with Mr. Storrs in supporting his amendment, and Mr. Rich vindicated his own amendment on the ground of the enormity of the crime of kidnapping; but Mr. Storrs's amendment was adopted by a large majority.

It was maintained by Mr. Claggett of New Hampshire that existing laws secured to the claimants all the rights that the Constitution guaranteed to them. If any legislation was necessary, it was to restrain the claimants from the abuse of power. Mr. Pindall maintained that the duty of delivering up fugitive slaves was imposed on the States, and that Congress could by law define and regulate the action of State officers in the performance of that duty. Mr. Fuller of Massachusetts moved to strike out the first section of the bill, because it transcended the provisions of the Constitution; and Mr. Strong spoke earnestly in opposition to the measure. Mr. Cobb of Georgia vindicated the rights of the holders of slaves as "inalienable and inviolable." Mr. Hopkinson of Pennsylvania thought that free-men might be apprehended, unless proper means of redress were provided. John Holmes of Massachusetts, afterward senator from Maine, expressed the opinion that the bill could be so worded as to be "unobjectionable" to any one. The nature of slave property, its evils, and the rights of its possessors were stated, defined, and illustrated by Mr. Clay. Mr. Baldwin of Pennsylvania, a native of Connecticut, a lawyer of eminence,

and afterward a judge of the Supreme Court, maintained that the Constitution conferred upon Congress the power so to legislate as to afford the fullest protection to the holders of slaves. The amendment proposed by Mr. Fuller was rejected.

It was then moved by Mr. Rich to recommit the bill to the committee to which was referred the memorial of the Quakers of Baltimore, to report such action as would protect the free people of color. The motion to recommit was defeated without a division. John Sergeant of Pennsylvania, one of the most distinguished advocates and statesmen of that day, then moved to amend the bill by empowering the judges of the State in which the person should be arrested, rather than the judges of the State from which it was alleged he had escaped, to determine whether such person owed service or labor. But this amendment was defeated by a large majority. Mr. Rich offered several other amendments to guard the rights of freemen, but they were rejected. It was then, by a large majority, ordered to a third reading.

The passage of the bill was strenuously opposed by Benjamin Adams of Massachusetts, because it contained provisions "dangerous to liberty and to the safety of free persons of color"; and Mr. Livermore of New Hampshire opposed it because it provided that alleged fugitives were not to be identified until they reached the State where the persons claiming them resided. This provision would expose free persons of color to be dragged from one part of the country to another. Jonathan Mason of Massachusetts — who had served in the Senate from 1800 to 1803, and who, though a Federalist, had been elected to the House over Mr. Ritchie, son-in-law of Harrison Gray Otis, by a few Federalists and by the Democratic party, and who afterward betrayed his constituents by voting for the Missouri Compromise — spoke at length in approval of the measure. He thought the tribunals of the South would decide more correctly than those of the North. So great was the leaning against slavery in Massachusetts, that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred juries would decide in favor of the fugitive. He did not wish, by denying just facilities for the recovery of fugitive slaves, to have the town where he lived "infested with the runaways of the South."

He was sustained by John Holmes, who did not think it "competent in Massachusetts to try a question between a Southern master and his slave," and he expressed the opinion that the freedom of no man in the North would be affected by the passage of the bill. Mr. Storrs of New York followed, and expressed his pleasure at the liberality manifested; and he hoped to see more of it displayed by gentlemen from the North, as an assurance that they "were willing to sacrifice some old prejudices to the spirit of harmony and mutual benefit." Mr. Whitman of Massachusetts denied the authority of Congress to compel State officers to perform the duty of arresting and returning fugitive slaves, and Mr. Williams of Connecticut opposed that provision under which a freeman might be dragged to another part of the country, and have his liberty endangered, if not destroyed. "In attempting," he said, "to guard the rights of property to one class of citizens, it was unjust that the rights of another class should be put in jeopardy." The bill was then passed by fifteen majority.

In the Senate it was referred to a committee, of which John J. Crittenden of Kentucky was chairman. He reported it with amendments. The question was debated with much earnestness. Mr. Smith of South Carolina spoke in its advocacy, and sharply criticised the action of the Northern States. Mr. Morrill of New Hampshire spoke at length in opposition to its provisions; and it was also strongly opposed by Mr. Roberts of Pennsylvania and by Mr. Burrill of Rhode Island. It passed by four majority, — Mr. Otis of Massachusetts, Mr. Sanford of New York, and Mr. Taylor of Indiana, voting for it; Mr. Horsey and Mr. Van Dyke, representing the slave State of Delaware, voting against it. It went back to the House for concurrence in amendments, and, though efforts were made to take it up, it was suffered to lie on the table. Northern members who had voted for it began to be alarmed at their own inconsiderate action, and shrank from the consummation of that cruel measure.

Four years afterward, in 1821, Mr. Wright of Maryland introduced a resolution into the House of Representatives for the appointment of a committee to consider the expediency of pro-

viding by law more effectually to secure the rendition of fugitive slaves. He warmly deprecated the interference of Quakers and others to prevent their reclamation, and significantly hinted that, if effectual means were not taken to secure the rights of Southern States, they might be driven to take up arms in support of their rights. The House, on motion of Mr. Campbell of Pennsylvania, referred the resolution to the Judiciary Committee, and a bill was reported. It was moved by Mr. Colden of New York so to amend it as to limit the power exercised under it to judges of courts of record. It was maintained that the law of 1793 was "inadequate," and a bill was "indispensably necessary." Mr. Colden then withdrew his proposed amendment, and moved as a test question to strike out the enacting clause. He declared that he was "not one of those visionary philanthropists who would contend for immediate and universal emancipation," but he believed the bill inconsistent with the principles of liberty, and would have a direct agency in promoting the traffic of selling free blacks for slaves which had been carried on to a great extent. On motion of Francis Johnson of Kentucky the bill was recommitted to a select committee, and again reported back with amendments; but no action thereupon was taken. Efforts to secure a law more stringent than the act of 1793 were continued, however, till they were crowned with success in the inhuman act of 1850.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE SLAVE-TRADE. — ITS PROHIBITION.

Increase of the Slave-trade. — Memorial of the National Convention of Abolition Societies. — Bill reported by Mr. Trumbull and passed. — Memorial of Pennsylvania Quakers against the Re-enslavement of Emancipated Negroes in North Carolina. — Exciting Debate. — Mr. Sitgreaves' Report adopted. — Mr. Hillhouse's Bill amendatory of the Slave-trade Act of 1794. — Senate Bill referred to a Select Committee in the House. — Reported with Amendments and passed. — President Jefferson recommends the Prohibition of the Slave-trade. — A Bill reported and passed in the Senate. — A Bill reported in the House. — A Debate thereon. — Mr. Sloan's Amendment. — Mr. Early's Threat. — Mr. Sloan's Amendment defeated. — Mr. Bidwell's Amendment. — Death Penalty proposed by Mr. Smilie. — Death Penalty defeated. — Bill recommitted. — Bill reported. — Laid on the Table. — Senate Bill taken up, amended, and passed. — Mr. Randolph's Defiance. — Further Legislation demanded.

THE compromises of the Constitution, by which the slave-trade was allowed to continue till 1808, breathed new life into that odious traffic. The moral obligation and restraining force imposed by the early action of the Continental Congress in prohibiting that traffic were greatly weakened or neutralized by this constitutional provision. Many who, in the fervor of the Revolutionary struggle, readily indorsed that noble action were now led, if they did not engage in the odious traffic themselves, to countenance those who were involved in it. The rapid growth of the country under the new government, the opening of fresh lands for settlement, and the increasing demand for Southern products, enhanced the price of slaves and stimulated the hateful trade. The ports of South Carolina and Georgia were opened wide to welcome cargoes of newly enslaved Africans. The prohibitory laws of the States were weakened or rendered nugatory by selfish interests; and Northern capital, ships, sailors, and merchants shared in the profits and in "the contamination of a traffic at which every feeling of humanity must forever revolt."

On the first day of January, 1794, a convention of delegates of abolition societies was held at Philadelphia. Ten States were represented. General Joseph Bloomfield of New Jersey, afterward governor of that State, and a general in the War of 1812, presided. It recommended the institution of annual discourses on the subject of slavery, and also an annual convention of delegates of abolition societies. It also sent forth an address to the citizens of the United States from the pen of that distinguished physician, philanthropist, and statesman, Dr. Benjamin Rush.

A memorial, signed by the president of the convention, was presented to the House of Representatives, praying Congress to pass a law to prohibit the traffic carried on by American citizens to supply slaves to foreign nations, and to prevent foreigners from fitting out vessels in this country for the African slave-trade. This memorial, a petition of the Quakers at the Yearly Meeting, and also one from the Providence Society for the abolition of the slave-trade, were referred to a committee of five, of which Mr. Trumbull of Connecticut, who had been Speaker of the House during the preceding Congress, was chairman. A bill was reported from this committee which, after being so amended as to insert the word "foreign" before the word "ship," or "vessel," was passed. When it reached the Senate, an unsuccessful motion for postponement was made, and it passed that body.

In November, 1797, Mr. Gallatin of Pennsylvania presented to the House of Representatives a memorial of the Quakers of that State, setting forth that one hundred and thirty-four slaves made free by the members of that society in North Carolina had been reduced to slavery again by retroactive laws. The memorialists pronounced that act "an abominable tragedy, tending to bring down the righteous judgments of Almighty God upon the land." They also called the attention of Congress to the "solemn league and covenant made with the Almighty," by which the first Continental Congress, in 1774, decreed that they would neither import slaves nor purchase slaves imported by others. They represented that this solemn covenant had been contravened by the cruelties

and wrongs practised on the colored race ; and they prayed Congress by timely and adequate legislation to redress these wrongs and cause these cruelties to cease.

A sharp debate at once sprang up, in which, though the general geographical divisions of sentiment on the subject of slavery appear, which generally obtained through the long struggle with increasing distinctness till its close, there were yet many and marked exceptions in which the most hard and heartless opinions fell from Northern lips, and generous and humane sentiments were clearly pronounced by some men from the South. Robert Goodloe Harper, one of the most eminent public men of that day, and then a representative from South Carolina, led off in the opposition. He thought that Congress and the State legislatures should set their faces against " remonstrances complaining of what it was utterly impossible to alter."

Mr. Rutledge of the same State, who had been nominated Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, but who had been rejected by the Senate, thought the Quakers ought to be censured by a report of the committee. He avowed that they were a set of men who attempted to seduce the servants of gentlemen travelling to the seat of government, and were constantly importuning Congress to interfere in a business with which it had no concern. Mr. Macon of North Carolina, who served more than thirty years in Congress, was Speaker of the House, and President *pro tem.* of the Senate, petulantly remarked that the Quakers, " instead of being peace-makers, were war-makers," as they were continually endeavoring in the Southern States to " stir up insurrection among the negroes." Expressing himself sarcastically or very unreasonably, he said it was extraordinary that the Quakers should come, session after session, with their petitions ; for, if they were dissatisfied with the laws of North Carolina, they had only to transfer their negroes to Pennsylvania, where they would be immediately set free. Even Mr. Sewell of Massachusetts, afterward Chief Justice of its Supreme Court, denied that Congress could furnish redress to the re-enslaved freemen, since it could not change the law of North Carolina.



On the other hand, the reference of the memorial was advocated by Mr. Thatcher of Massachusetts, whose twelve years in Congress, from 1789 to 1801, were years of undeviating devotion to freedom. He maintained that, if the Quakers thought themselves aggrieved, it was their duty to present their petitions "three, five, or seventy times," until their grievances were redressed. Mr. Swanwick of Pennsylvania expressed the opinion that the uncommon warmth which was shown led many persons to believe that gentlemen were unwilling to have such matters looked into. Mr. Gallatin scouted the idea that the petition would shake the property of the country, when it was only a paper reminding them of certain black men, not slaves, but freemen. Mr. Allen of Connecticut trusted the petition would not be rejected, as its rejection would be highly disrespectful to a society revered by every man who sets a value on virtue and integrity. Mr. Livingston of New York, afterward General Jackson's Secretary of State, said that, if the petitioners were of the description represented, — if they had endeavored to raise insurrection in one part of the country and practise robbery in another, — he should not be inclined to pay much respect to them.

Thus the debate ran on, revealing rather the individuality, interests, and associations of the different participants than the well-matured convictions and formally accepted positions of either persons or parties in the strife. In new and untried circumstances they were evidently grappling with a question they did not fully understand, whose height and depth, length and breadth, they did but imperfectly comprehend. If they did not jump at conclusions, evidently much that was said in that debate was rather the utterance of first impressions than of well-reasoned deductions, carefully drawn from a patient and thorough examination.

Thus Mr. Parker of Massachusetts, afterward Chief Justice of that State, opposed the reference of the petition because it asked Congress to act upon a subject on which it had no power to act; while Mr. Bayard, a lawyer of great eminence from Delaware, declared that he was warranted in saying that the Constitution gave the House jurisdiction over the matter



of the re-enslavement of those made free by their masters, for "no State had the right to make *ex post facto* laws." Josiah Parker of Virginia insolently remarked that he would consent to the petition's lying on the table or under the table. Much more reasonably and frankly did Mr. Nicholas of the same State declare that it would be for the honor of people holding slaves to look into the matter, as "it was not for the interest of slaveholders to cover improper practices." He should, indeed, be sorry if his possessing property of that kind obliged him to cover the violation of another man's rights.

Mr. Gordon of New Hampshire saw nothing in the memorial calling for the interference of Congress. Gentlemen were reminded by Mr. Thatcher that, while they were opposing the reading of the memorial, they were filing off in squads and fighting to get a sight of it. Mr. Smith of Maryland coolly said that the laws of Virginia permitting emancipation by the masters made the slaves of neighboring States unhappy and gave their masters considerable uneasiness. The memorial was then referred to a committee of five, of which Mr. Sitgreaves of Pennsylvania was chairman. After several conferences with the memorialists, and a careful examination of the subject, the committee reported it as their opinion that it was strictly a judicial question, with which Congress, as a legislative body, could not legitimately intermeddle. Though Mr. Rutledge and Mr. Thatcher expressed themselves dissatisfied with the report, it was adopted by a large majority.

The act of 1794, to prevent the fitting out of vessels in the ports of the United States engaged in supplying slaves to foreigners, did not accomplish the purpose intended. Further legislation was demanded. Accordingly, near the close of the year 1799, Mr. Hillhouse of Connecticut moved in the Senate for the appointment of a committee for the revision of the law. The motion being adopted, a committee of three, consisting of himself, Dexter of Massachusetts, and Read of Delaware, were appointed, who reported a bill which was passed.

Near the close of April, 1800, the House proceeded to the consideration of the bill received from the Senate. In the

debate which followed New England found little occasion for complacency when she compared the utterances of one of her representatives, John Brown of Rhode Island, with those of the representatives of Virginia and Delaware. Making the extraordinary declaration that it was improper to prevent the citizens of the United States from participating in a trade enjoyed by all European nations, Mr. Brown said he well knew that Congress was drilled into passing the previous act by the well-known abolition society, otherwise the Society of Friends, who were "very troublesome till they got the act passed." He thought it poor policy to prevent a trade allowed to be profitable; and it ought to be considered wrong, in a moral point of view, to prevent it, as the people themselves profited by it. It ought to be a matter of national policy, as it would bring in a revenue to the treasury. Avowing such sentiments, he was, of course, in favor of postponing the further consideration of the measure.

In striking contrast with these heartless and immoral sentiments were those of Mr. Nicholas of Virginia, who said that, as a Southern man, he was obliged, in common with the people of the South, to keep men in a state of slavery; but they were endeavoring to ameliorate the condition of that race. Mr. Bayard agreed with Mr. Brown that the government could derive a large revenue from the support of the slave-trade, but he thought "a more dishonorable item of revenue could not be imagined." He pronounced the bill, however, extremely imperfect, and moved its reference to a select committee. This motion, though opposed by Mr. Rutledge, was adopted; the bill was recommitted, reported back with amendments, and adopted, — only five voting against it. The Senate promptly concurred in the amendments, and it became a law.

Among the consequences of the insurrection and revolution in San Domingo were the violent expulsion and expatriation of large numbers of the defeated. Among them were negroes, who sought and found refuge in the United States. The presence of a few men of the African race who had fought for liberty and independence aroused alike the fears and passions of the slave-masters. The horrors of a servile insurrection

loomed up before their excited imaginations ; and those who saw thousands of slaves imported into South Carolina and other Southern States, with no compunctions of conscience or solicitude as to the result, were greatly alarmed and their zeal was greatly quickened by the arrival of a few black men from San Domingo with minds inflamed by dreams of liberty. Legislation was demanded. Memorials were presented from North Carolina, setting forth the dangers to the Southern States from the immigration of this class of persons. These memorials were referred to a committee, of which Mr. Hill of that State was chairman. He reported a bill in January, 1803, forbidding under severe penalties the coming of such persons, already forbidden by the laws of several of the States.

This advanced position and new demand, made in the interests of slavery, excited both opposition and alarm, which would have been largely increased had their full significance and bearing been clearly comprehended. Mr. Bacon of Massachusetts was dissatisfied with the principles involved in that measure. He emphatically declared that he was not to be "intimidated by a personal reflection or affected sneers, nor yet by any inhuman threats that can be uttered to supply the place of manly discussion." He avowed that the proposed measure made discriminations between citizens of the United States ; that such citizens could not, for the purposes of commerce or in case of distress, enter the ports of particular States, or sail along their coasts, without subjecting themselves to the severe penalties of the bill. He further declared that it made the same discrimination between citizens of particular States as between citizens of the United States.

Mr. Mott of New Jersey objected to it on the ground of its unconstitutionality. Mr. Mitchell of New York moved its recommitment for the purpose of amendment ; which motion was supported by several members, on the ground of its alleged unconstitutionality, and because it abridged the rights of the colored citizens of some of the States by prohibiting their entrance into certain States, under the severe penalties of a fine of a thousand dollars and the forfeiture of the vessel carrying them. This recommitment was strenuously opposed by Hill,



Early, and Randolph, who acknowledged that "its penalties were rigorous, but were only such as the imminent danger of the Southern States called for." Though the motion for a recommitment was lost, another motion, by Mr. Nicholson of Maryland, to recommit to a select committee was carried by a small majority. Being reported in a new draft, with some modifications, it was adopted by a vote of three to one. In the Senate it was referred to a committee, which reported it without amendments, and it became a law, inhuman as it was, and inherently opposed to the then loudly vaunted doctrine of human rights and to the fundamental principles of the newly established republican institutions.

In 1803 South Carolina repealed her law prohibiting the importation of slaves. This action was deeply regretted by most of her sister States, both on account of its intrinsic wrongfulness and inhumanity, and because it plainly revealed the drift of her public sentiment to be, not toward the amelioration and speedy extinction of slavery, as expected and predicted by the authors of the compromises of the Constitution, but rather a stride in the opposite direction. To check and discourage this iniquitous traffic, early in January, 1804, Mr. Bard of Pennsylvania introduced a resolution imposing a tax of ten dollars on every slave imported. The House did not proceed to its consideration until the middle of the next month, when Mr. Lowndes of South Carolina led off in the debate, which, like the previous discussion, revealed what seemed to be crude and hastily formed opinions, rather than the matured and sharply defined argumentation of men who had long studied and deliberately chosen the one or the other of the two sides of a mooted question. He opposed the tax because, while it would not prevent the importation of a single slave, the fact of the government's deriving a revenue from it could be viewed in no other light than a sanction of the traffic. Though opposed to the slave-trade himself, he admitted that the Southern people felt a deep interest in it, and that the acquisition of Louisiana, then just made, would strengthen that interest. Mr. Bedinger of Kentucky thought such a law would rather sanction than discourage the trade; and Mr. Macon, Speaker of the House,



opposed it as an impolitic measure. Roger Griswold of Connecticut, a gentleman of large capacity and great influence in the Federal party, declared his abhorrence of the slave-trade ; but he opposed the tax because it would appear to the world that Congress was raising a revenue from " a commerce in slaves."

Mr. Bard, however, spoke earnestly in favor of his resolution, and maintained that the tax proposed was designed to interpose every discouragement to the importation of slaves, and was supported only incidentally as a source of revenue. It was also eloquently supported by Mr. Mitchell of New York, who reminded the House that in various parts of the country outfits were made for slave voyages without secrecy, shame, or apprehension ; that, countenanced by their fellow-citizens, who were as willing to buy slaves as they were to collect and bring them to market, merciless men, as greedy as the sharks of the element on which they sailed, " clandestinely embarked the sooty offspring of the Eastern for the ill-fated soil of the Western hemisphere." He estimated that during the preceding year twenty thousand enslaved negroes had been added, by smuggling, to the plantation stock of Georgia and South Carolina.

Mr. Stanton of Rhode Island, in a similar strain, expressed his gratification to find honorable members in every part of the House who " reprobate the infamous traffic of buying and selling the human species." It was not his intention to criminate South Carolina, whose late conduct had created serious and well-founded alarm ; but he could not " connive at a measure that goes to shake the pillars of public security, threatens corruption to the morals of our citizens, and tarnishes the American character." Mr. Southard of New Jersey rejoiced at the introduction of the resolution, because " it gave the national legislature an opportunity to hear their opinions against the increase of slaves." Even a South Carolina representative, Mr. Thomas Moore, though he opposed the tax, expressed the hope that the House would discourage the impolitic act of his State by enacting a law expressive of its disapprobation.

There were others, however, more pronounced in their opposition to the resolution because it was introduced in the

interests of freedom. Thus Mr. Huger of South Carolina maintained that the Constitution was "the offspring of concession and compromise," that under it South Carolina enjoyed "the exclusive right of judging of the propriety of allowing the trade or prohibiting it"; and he felt sensibly the singling out of his State for censure for doing what she had a right to do. He emphatically asserted that the people of the North, "who make the most noise upon the subject, are those who, when they go to the South, first hire, then buy, and, last of all, turn out the severest masters among us." This ill-natured criticism was undoubtedly then, and has been unquestionably since, too true. Of a similar spirit were the remarks of Mr. Eppes of Virginia, son-in-law of President Jefferson, who said that he lived in a State where slaves were as much the subject of taxation as lands; but he did not know that the statute-books of Virginia were stained by imposing taxes upon them. According to some estimates, one hundred thousand slaves would be imported in four years. Accordingly, a revenue of a million of dollars would accrue therefrom. Mr. Early moved its postponement till the first Monday of May; and his motion was supported by Gregg of Pennsylvania, Lyon of Kentucky, and Huger. But it failed, and the resolution was adopted by a large majority, and referred to the Committee of Ways and Means, which immediately reported a bill. Mr. Lowndes moved that its consideration be postponed till the first day of December, which was opposed by Mr. Eppes, and supported by Mr. Jackson; but it failed of securing the necessary vote, though subsequently a motion of Mr. Findley to postpone to the second Monday of March prevailed by a majority of six.

During the debate Mr. Rodney of Delaware expressed his gratification that "so inhuman a practice was justly reprobated by all." He said that every gentleman from the South as well as the East deprecated the act of South Carolina. But he was in favor of delaying action till the sentiment of that State could be ascertained. "No man," he said, "can ascribe to me a friendship for slavery. I have been uniformly and warmly opposed to it. To blot it out of the pages of our

country is one of the objects nearest my heart. In my own State I have hitherto maintained an unequal conflict on this subject. But great is the force of truth, and it will prevail." Little did this distinguished son of Delaware then imagine that his State would, when the trial came, be among the most persistent in opposition to the policy of emancipation. Mr. Elmer of New Jersey advocated the passage of the measure, because it was predicated on a sound principle of morality and economy. The bill, however, never came to a vote, owing to the pressure of the representatives from South Carolina, to allow her legislature to repeal the obnoxious act. But she never retraced her steps; and, though in that whole debate not one word of apology or defence was raised in behalf of her disgraceful action and position, she persisted in her policy, and the infamous traffic was vigorously prosecuted under the sanction of her laws.

The time fixed by the Constitution empowering Congress to prohibit the African slave-trade was approaching. Mr. Jefferson, in his message to the second session of the Ninth Congress, in 1806, thus alluded to the subject: "I congratulate you, fellow-citizens, on the approach of a period at which you may interpose your authority constitutionally to withdraw the citizens of the United States from all participation in the violation of human rights which has been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa, and which the morality, the reputation, and the best interests of the country have long been eager to prescribe. Although no law you can pass can take prohibitory effect until the first day of the year 1808, yet the intervening period is not too long to prevent, by timely notice, expeditions which cannot be completed before that day."

The subject, however, like everything connected with slavery and its recognition in the Constitution, was beset with difficulties, resulting from the abnormal state of affairs, and the pertinacity of the slaveholders against any legislation which threatened to interfere with their system. Rightly concluding that there would be infractions of any law that could be framed against the horrible but profitable traffic, it was, of



course, needful to affix penalties against its violation, and make some disposition of the victims found in the hands of the guilty men who might be detected in that violation. These two points were the subjects of special interest, as they became the themes of much angry discussion.

So much of the President's message as related to the prohibition of the slave-trade was referred to a select committee, of which Mr. Early of Georgia was chairman. A bill, too, was promptly introduced into the Senate, to prevent the importation of slaves after the 1st of January, 1808. It was referred to a committee, of which Mr. Bradley of Vermont was chairman. He reported it back, and it became the subject of an earnest and excited debate for three weeks, when it was passed and sent to the House. A similar bill had been reported in that body by Mr. Early on the 15th of the same month. It had six sections. Among them was one making it unlawful to import any person of color, with intent to keep or sell; another, forfeiting to the United States any person so imported; and another still, imposing the forfeiture of vessels, and fines upon persons fitting out such vessels. In the long and earnest debate which followed was revealed the fact that there was no dissent from the proposition to put an end to the odious traffic. Whether from motives of policy, humanity, or Christian morality, there was a general acquiescence in the prohibition. The questions at issue were concerning the proper penalties to be prescribed, and the proper disposition to be made of any Africans who might be imported in contravention of the law. These were vehemently and passionately discussed. The slave-masters, who had early acquired almost complete ascendancy in the government, seemed determined that their cherished system should receive no damage from this proposed prohibition. Whatever else might follow, slavery must not be harmed. The debate, however, revealed great diversity of views, even among those whose purposes were in the main alike.

Mr. Sloan of New Jersey, a member of the Society of Friends, moved to amend the bill by inserting after the word "forfeited" the words, "and such person or slave shall be entitled



to his freedom." Mr. Alston of North Carolina doubted the power of Congress to free slaves imported into any particular State when the laws directed they should be sold. Mr. Eppes moved to amend the amendment, so as to provide that the forfeiture should take place in the States where slavery was not permitted. Mr. Early thought there was an absurdity in Mr. Sloan's amendment, providing that a person should be forfeited and sold, and yet should be free. To this Mr. Sloan replied that it ought to be the object of the bill totally to prohibit the importation of slaves into the United States, or selling them therein.

The amendment was then vehemently opposed by Mr. Early, who declared that "on the decision of this question would turn another, — whether the government would now prohibit the slave-trade or not. It is true, if we pass this bill as it stands, that persons imported will not only be forfeited, but be sold as slaves, and be afterward kept as such. This is a melancholy truth, — melancholy because without such a provision we can pass no law that can be effectual. What can we do with this description of persons, in case they are brought into this country in contravention of this act?" "I am not prepared," said Mr. Smilie of Pennsylvania, "to say what is best to be done; but I will never give my consent to the last section of the bill. Shall we, while we are attempting to put a stop to this traffic, take upon ourselves the odium of being slave-traders?"

The Speaker, Mr. Macon, expressed the opinion that the sentiment was unanimous against the importation of slaves; but he confessed that there were grave difficulties in the way of deciding what was to become of cargoes imported. Those persons knew nothing about the country, could not speak its language, and he desired to know what was to become of them. Mr. Early, after saying that the most formidable aspect in which this question could present itself was that of making them free in slaveholding communities, emphatically proclaimed that, if they were turned loose "upon us, we must either get rid of them or they of us. I will speak out; it is not my practice to be mealy-mouthed on a subject of importance. Not one of them will be left alive in a year."

Mr. Barker of Massachusetts thought the illegally imported Africans should be made free and returned to their native land ; but the amendment was rejected, only nineteen voting for it. Mr. Bidwell of Massachusetts having moved to strike out the forfeiture clause, Mr. Quincy of the same State opposed the motion, remarking that this afforded the only way by which the United States could get control of them. If they were imported into the South, they would be made slaves ; if into the North, they would become vagabonds. Mr. Williams of North Carolina sneeringly remarked that gentlemen were “ completely hobbled,” — that they must go on or stick where they were. Mr. Pitkin of Connecticut strongly objected to forfeiting the imported Africans, and moved to recommit the bill to a select committee. The motion was carried, and it was re-committed to a committee of seven, of which Mr. Early was made chairman. Mr. Smilie, remarking that the captain of a slave-ship was guilty of murder, proposed for the consideration of the select committee a new section, providing that any one duly convicted of violating the law should suffer death.

When the debate was resumed, Mr. Findley of Pennsylvania advocated the binding out of the forfeited negroes for a term of years. Mr. Bidwell opposed the forfeiture clause, because it proceeded wholly on a false principle, and implied that the importer had a right to his slave. As to the question what should be done with the imported Africans, he was willing to “ agree to any practicable method.”

Mr. Quincy made a long and very able speech. He regretted that they could not devise some plan to which they all might assent ; and he thought it might be effected “ if gentlemen would come down from their high abstract ground to the level of things in their actual state.” Alluding to the assertion that the African prince and the slave-trader could acquire no right of property in the captive prisoner of the former, or in the purchased slaves of the latter, he said : “ Their conclusions are correct ; their principles are solid. Refer the claim of either to five hundred juries of New England, and five hundred verdicts would be obtained against it. . . . But the misfortune is that, notwithstanding all these unquestionable principles, the

African prince does at this day, and after this law passes will, sell his subjects. To all practical purposes a title is acquired in them; and they are passed, like other property, from one to another in their native country. But this is not the worst. A title to this description of persons is not only allowed in Africa, but is and must be after your law passes, in a large section of your own country. . . . Now this is that real, practical state of things to which we must look and on which we must legislate. How? Do all we can to *prohibit*. If you fail in this, and such persons are imported, then forfeit,—because that is the surest mode of prohibition, by taking away the inducement to purchase; because the government, with the title in its own hands, can exercise its rights in the interests of humanity. The objection “that it ‘admits a title’ is only in *seeming*.” All that is necessarily implied is that all of title there is, more or less, passes into the hands of the general government, to be used for their good. What the government shall do with them may be left for future consideration.”

Mr. Macon having said that this was a commercial question merely, with which the laws of nations have nothing to do, Mr. Smilie remarked that this question is connected with principles of a higher order than those merely commercial. Repeating the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence, he inquired how these rights are connected with commercial principles. The motion to strike out the clause on forfeiture was lost by a large majority. The report of the select committee coming up for consideration on the last day of the month and year, a motion was made to substitute imprisonment for not less than five nor more than ten years for the penalty of death, for the violation of the proposed law. Mr. Sloan remarked that there were many crimes inferior to this punishable with death. Depicting the horrors of the traffic, he affirmed that “there should be a proportion in these things.”

Mr. Ely of Massachusetts thought it the most heinous of crimes, and he advocated so severe a punishment because he wished to adopt the most effectual method to stop it. Mr. Tallmadge of Connecticut expressed surprise that where



there was such unanimity of purpose as to the end, there should be such diversity of sentiment as to the means. "My only wish," he said, "is to affix to it so exemplary a punishment that we may, if possible, totally suppress it." Alluding to the similarity between those laws early enacted in the civilized world and those given to the Jews, he quoted the command: "And he that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death," and inquired: "If this was the punishment by Heaven decreed for man-stealers and man-sellers, then shall imprisonment and fines be substituted now? Shall we place this most abominable traffic, which I fear ere long will call down the vengeance of Heaven on our heads, in the list of minor offences?"

Mr. Moseley of Connecticut, alluding to "the air of triumph" with which Southern men charged the crime of this traffic to the people of the Northern States who were importing slaves into their markets, expressed wonder that they should be so tender of these Northern men. He believed that if any of his section were convicted of this grave offence, his constituents would thank the South for hanging them. Alluding to the fact that in some States "a man is put to death for stealing fifty dollars," Mr. Smilie said: "Suppose some philosophical historian, some ages hence, should find that we punish such trifles with death, but this traffic with simple imprisonment, would not such a paragraph in his history be an everlasting disgrace to our country?"

But there were not wanting those who made no concealment of the tendency and drift of their sentiments and feelings, by counselling mild measures against even the vile miscreants of the slave-traffic, — some who, in their determination to maintain and profit by its fruits, found an adequate reason for dealing gently with those who only furnished them these fruits. Thus, Mr. Early doubted the propriety of the death penalty, because the people would not execute it. For, he said, "Southern people do not regard this traffic a crime. They are all concerned in slavery. They consider it an evil, and apprehend, at some future day, mischievous consequences; but few consider it a crime. It is best to be candid on this



subject. . . . If they considered it a crime, they would necessarily accuse themselves. I will tell the truth. A large majority of them do not consider it even an evil." Indorsing the same view, Mr. Holland of North Carolina went a step further, and said, by implication at least, that there was no essential difference, not only between the foreign and domestic slave-trade, but he added, with damaging emphasis, between it and the common practice of slavery itself. He said: "The importer might say to the informer that he had done no worse, nor even so bad, as he. It is true that I have these slaves from Africa; but I have transported them from one master to another. I am not guilty of holding human beings in bondage. But you are. You have hundreds on your plantation in this miserable condition. By your purchase you tempt traders to increase the evil. He might hold the same language to the jury and the judge who try him. Under such circumstances the law inflicting death would not be executed."

Mr. Clay of Pennsylvania insisted that the death penalty for the violation of this law could not be carried into effect even in his State. And Mr. Stanton of Rhode Island said that those who bought were as bad as those who import, and deserve hanging just as much; "but," he added, thus revealing his sympathies upon the subject, "I cannot believe that a man ought to be hung for only stealing a negro." The motion to strike out the death penalty was carried by a vote of sixty-three to fifty-two; and it is to be noted that these damaging admissions concerning slavery came from its defenders. It was a friend, and not an enemy, who said that there was no essential difference, not only between the foreign and domestic slave-trade, but between it and the common practice of slavery itself. It was an advocate who said that they who bought were as bad as those who import, and "deserve hanging just as much."

Early in January, 1807, Mr. Findley offered a proviso that "no person shall be sold as a slave by virtue of this act"; but it was lost by the casting vote of the Speaker. The next day the bill was recommitted, on motion of Mr. Bedinger, to a committee of seventeen, who so amended it as to provide

that all persons imported in violation of the act should be sent to the free States, bound out for a limited time, and made free. The Senate bill was also referred to the same committee, and on the 9th of February the House proceeded to the consideration of the measure. That portion of the act authorizing the President to take such persons as were forfeited and "indenture them as apprentices or servants, as most beneficial for them and safe for the United States, *out, however, of the slave States,*" led to a heated and angry debate, lasting the whole day. Even this mild and, it would seem, favorable disposition of such persons was strenuously opposed by Southern men. Mr. Early emphatically declared that "the people of the South would resist this provision of the bill with their lives"; and he moved to amend it by providing that negroes so imported should be delivered to the State authorities, to be disposed of as they may determine. His violent utterances, however, were sharply rebuked by Mr. Smilie, who reminded him that the House was not to be frightened by threats of civil war. Mr. Early explained that he only meant to say that troops would be necessary to enforce the act.

The House bill was laid upon the table. The Senate bill was then taken up, and the death penalty stricken out, by a majority of nineteen. It forbade the transportation, for purposes of sale, of any negro on board of any vessel under forty tons' burden; but, on motion of Mr. Early, it was amended so as to exclude the Senate prohibition of the domestic slave-trade. The Senate bill also provided that neither importer nor purchaser should gain any legal title to persons illegally imported. Mr. Williams moved to substitute the word "retain" for the word "have" or "gain"; and the motion to strike out was agreed to, but the word "hold" instead of "retain" was substituted. Mr. Williams then vehemently declared that the substitution of that word "hold" instead of "retain" would lead to the destruction and massacre of the whites in the Southern States. The Senate bill as thus amended was passed, only five voting in the negative.

The Senate promptly concurring in the amendments, excepting the proviso allowing the domestic slave-trade, the House

resumed the consideration of the bill. On the motion to recede from the amendment, John Randolph, who had remained silent during the debate, made a violent and defiant speech, declaring, "if the bill passed without the amendment, the Southern people would set the law at defiance, and he would set the example." The House voted not to recede, and a committee of conference was appointed. This committee adopted a modification, forbidding "the transportation of slaves coastwise in vessels under forty tons with a view to sale."

The report caused a very acrimonious debate. Mr. Randolph said "he had rather lose the bill, he had rather lose all the bills of the session, he had rather lose every bill passed since the establishment of the government, than agree to the provision contained in this slave bill. It went to blow up the Constitution in ruins." "The whole bill," said Mr. Williams, "is not worth a single farthing." After much acrimonious discussion, a vote was reached, and the modification was adopted by a majority of fourteen. The Senate accepting the modification, the bill was passed. Subsequently a committee was chosen, on motion of Mr. Randolph, to prepare an explanatory act. He reported a bill, which was referred to the committee of the whole, from which it never emerged.

In defiance of the laws of Congress and the claims of humanity, the foreign slave-trade continued to be stealthily carried on; and the domestic slave-trade, too, by land and sea, was prosecuted with increasing vigor. It was estimated that not less than fifteen thousand slaves were annually imported into the Southern States. The domestic slave-trade was stimulated by the increasing demand from the Gulf States. To its ordinary hardships and horrors were added those growing out of an extensive system of kidnapping. The honor of the country and the claims of humanity alike demanded additional legislation.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN SLAVE-TRADE. — NEGOTIATIONS WITH FOREIGN POWERS.

Extent of Domestic and Foreign Slave-trade. — Cruel Character of the Traffic. — Slave-breeding. — Prosecution of the Foreign Trade. — Christian Sentiment. — Action of the Quakers. — Motion of Mr. Burrell. — Rufus King. — Mr. Morrill. — Mr. Eaton's Motion. — Mercer's Resolution. — Passage of the Bill. — Mr. Gorham's Report. — Co-operation with Foreign Powers recommended. — Treaty of 1815. — British Proposition. — Mr. Rush's Treaty. — Action of England. — Dilatory Action of the Senate. — Treaty amended. — Mr. Clay's Reply. — Insincerity of the American Government.

AMERICAN slavery was multiform in its aspects and capacities for evil. Among these various phases and features stood out, in bold and black relief, the slave-trade, — foreign and domestic. This, in all its developments, — from the first sale of his captive by the robber chief in Africa, through all the horrors of the middle passage and the slave coffle, till the last transfer, — was an essential part of the system. Not only did many of the slave-masters make their most strenuous exertions for its protection and preservation, but those exertions were too often connived at, if not aided, by the general government. A true estimate, then, of the extent and blameworthiness of the national complicity in this great crime requires a glance at the character and amount of that commerce in human beings.

After the peace of 1815 the demand for slave labor greatly increased, and the price of slaves largely advanced. Consequently the slave-trade was prosecuted with renewed vigor. Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Virginia became the seat of the disgraceful traffic, the head-quarters and field of operations of those who, in the prosecution of their terrible business, here sought its victims and furnished supplies for the



Southwestern market. So cruel and shameless did the trade become that many masters themselves and defenders of the system revolted at such demonstrations, and entered their earnest protests against the logical sequences of their own theories. John Randolph denounced it as inhuman and abominable, and moved for a committee of investigation ; but nothing came of it. Even a governor of South Carolina, in a message to his legislature, denounced " this remorseless and merciless traffic, the ceaseless dragging along the streets and highways of a crowd of suffering victims to minister to insatiable avarice," and he, too, invoked legislative action. And this is but a tithe of Southern testimony, not to be impeached by the charge of abolition, prejudice, and extravagance. A Kentucky synod of the Presbyterian church thus refers to the slave coffle, often seen in that State, proclaiming, it said, " the iniquity of *our* system." " There is not a village," it adds, " that does not behold the sad procession of manacled victims." Mr. Paulding, afterward Mr. Van Buren's Secretary of the Navy, thus describes a party of these Northern slaves, which he met in 1815, sold for a Southern market. " In a cart," he said, " tumbled like pigs, were half a dozen half-naked black children, who seemed to have been actually broiled to sleep, followed by scantily clothed women, without shoes or stockings, and men, bareheaded, half clad, and chained together with an ox-chain," followed by a white man with pistols in his belt. A Southern editor wrote of the same kind of procession as " with heavy, galling chains riveted upon their person, half naked, half starved," these victims of man's unfeeling rapacity, were travelling to a region where " their miserable condition will be second only to the wretched creatures in hell."

Nor were these rare, extreme, exceptional cases. They were the order of the day. The Border States had become slave-breeding communities, making the raising of slaves a special and fostered interest. Still quoting Southern testimony, a Baltimore journal said: " Dealing in slaves has become a large business ; establishments are made in several places in Maryland and Virginia, at which they are sold like cattle. These places of deposit are strongly built, and well supplied

with iron thumb-screws and gags, and are ornamented with cow-skins, oftentimes bloody." Thomas Jefferson Randolph said in the Virginia legislature, in 1832, that the "State was one grand menagerie, where men are reared for the market like oxen for the shambles." Comparing the domestic and foreign slave-trade, he pronounced the former "much the worse"; for while the latter, he said, only took "strangers in aspect, language, and manner," in the former, an individual takes those he had "known from infancy," — he might have put it far more strongly, — tears "them from the mother's arms," and sells them "into a strange country, among a strange people, subject to cruel taskmasters." Mr. Gholson admitted the like fact, and added, "I do not hesitate to say that in its increase consists much of our wealth." Professor Dew, afterwards president of William and Mary College, in a review of the great debate in the Virginia legislature, in 1831 – 32, on the slavery question, felt called upon to answer the objection that this traffic would depopulate Virginia of its black population, which he did by saying that it added largely to its revenues, and thus "becomes an advantage to the State, and does not check the black population as much as at first view we might imagine, because it furnishes every inducement to the master to attend to the negroes, *to encourage breeding, and to cause the greatest number possible to be raised.* . . . Virginia is in fact a negro-raising State for other States."

Now when it is remembered that this was not spoken in the heat of debate by a political partisan, but written by a cultivated, scholarly man in the calm retirement of his study, — an educator, too, of young men in the venerable college of his State, — discoursing of slave-breeding and slave-selling as if they were mere matters of political economy, precisely as he would write of raising stock and improved breeds of animals, coolly putting the two abhorrent ideas together, — the one as indecent as the other was inhuman, — and arguing that the stimulus thus given to slave-breeding was an adequate compensation for the losses incurred by slave-selling, — something of the moral tendency of the system he defends and advocates may be estimated. And what gives its deepest shading to

this dark picture is the fact that this increase was secured by a persistent ignoring of the family relation, that these slaves were born out of wedlock, and were the fruits of a promiscuous concubinage. If this was the style of thought and feeling pervading the upper strata of society, the sentiments of the lower class must have been simply horrible, and the utter social demoralization which the rebellion revealed ceases to be a matter of wonder. In the prosecution of this terrible business, by the confession of the slave-dealers themselves, the family tie was disregarded, and infants were taken from the mother's arms, while she was sold and they retained. And this traffic had become so enormous that in 1836 it was estimated that the number sold from the single State of Virginia was forty thousand, yielding a return of twenty-four millions of dollars. It was, in fact, the great business, licensed and protected by laws, advertised in the papers, and recognized as one of the branches of legitimate production and trade. Of course there were those in whom the sense of justice, humanity, and shame was not altogether extinct, and they realized its enormity. Editors saw it and denounced it, ecclesiastical bodies condemned it, judges charged juries, and juries presented it as a grievance and nuisance. Thus Judge Morsell, of the Circuit Court, charged the grand jury of Washington that "the frequency with which the streets of this city have been crowded with manacled captives, sometimes on the sabbath, cannot fail to shock all humane persons."

While these scenes were enacting in the interests of the domestic slave-traffic, the foreign was still prosecuted with vigor. Without adducing the facts, it may be sufficient to quote the language of Judge Story, of the Supreme Court of the United States, in a charge to a grand jury in 1819. "We have," he said, "but too many proofs from unquestionable sources that — the African trade — is still carried on with the implacable ferocity and insatiable rapacity of former times. Avarice has grown more subtle in its evasions, and it watches and seizes its prey with an appetite quickened, rather than suppressed by its guilty vigils. American citizens are steeped to their very mouths — I can scarcely use too bold a figure — in



this stream of iniquity.” And the numbers thus smuggled into the country at that time were estimated by a Southern man at from thirteen thousand to fifteen thousand annually. These statistics of the domestic and foreign traffic are easily written, but who can measure the unmitigated wrongs and untold wretchedness involved in the sale and transportation of each one of the victims for whom they stand? If Mr. Jefferson’s arraignment of slavery was not extravagant, when he declared that one hour of the slave’s bondage was fraught with greater evil than ages of the oppression of Great Britain, in revolt from which our fathers fought through the Revolution, what shall be said of the superadded horrors, not only of a single year’s export from a single State of forty thousand men, women, and children, but of the vast aggregate of all the States and all the years of this iniquitous trade? And what shall be said of the scores of thousands of smuggled victims of foreign and piratical expeditions, extending over the same years, subjected not only to the ordinary horrors of the slave-trade, but to sufferings greatly increased and intensified by the outlawry and ban of the civilized world, under which they must be conducted? Surely it transcends all human conception.

It was not strange, perhaps, that vile and rapacious men were found ready and reckless enough to engage in this ill-favored commerce in the bodies and souls of men, and that for the extravagant profits which rewarded a successful venture in the foreign trade there were those who would run the risk of detection; but it was a singular, an astounding fact that a young and professedly Christian republic was found, if not indorsing, yet consenting to it, — if not protecting, at least tolerating it. For the disgraceful record not only reveals the fact that Congress, though often petitioned to abolish the interstate slave-trade, always refused such prayers, not even adopting any regulations in the interests of humanity in relation to it, but it shows that “an official document was submitted,” in 1819, by Mr. Nourse, Register of the Treasury, in which he certified that, though the act of 1807, abolishing the slave-trade, required the forfeiture to the government of the



Africans thus illegally introduced into the country, yet of the more than a hundred thousand which, by Southern admission, had been surreptitiously brought here, there were no records in the Treasury Department of any forfeitures under the act. When Anthony Burns was to be remanded to slavery, the whole military and naval power of the general government was placed at the disposal of the slave-master, and he was remanded to his cruel bondage. Of more than a hundred thousand persons imported into the United States in violation of law and entitled to their freedom by it, not one found it, at least in the way provided in the statute.

Of course this wholesale and persistent outrage upon all law, human and divine, excited the sympathy, the indignation, and the apprehension of the humane and patriotic. Nor was the country ever without earnest protestants and witnesses for the right and against the wrong. The faithful Quakers and others besieged Congress with their petitions, though generally with unsatisfying and indifferent results. In March, 1817, Mr. Roberts of Pennsylvania introduced a resolution asking for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the expediency of making further provision against the introduction of slaves. A committee was granted, which reported a bill that passed both Houses. By its provisions the penalties of the Prohibitory Act were applied to the fitting out of vessels for the trade and the transportation of slaves to any country ; and in all cases where negroes were found on shipboard, the burden of proof was put on those in whose possession they were found.

Notwithstanding this legislation, however, the foreign and domestic slave-trade went on unchecked. Further legislation and the rigorous enforcement of existing laws were demanded by the friends of freedom and humanity. The Quakers, as ever on the alert, were foremost in calling for the suppression of both the foreign and domestic traffic. The Yearly Meeting of Friends sent a memorial to Congress near the close of the year 1817, for further provision by law for the suppression of the trade in negroes between the Middle and Southern States. This memorial was referred by the Senate to a committee of five, of which Mr. Goldsborough of Maryland was chairman.

A few days afterwards Mr. Burrill of Rhode Island moved that the committee, to which had been referred the memorial, be instructed to inquire into the expediency of amending the laws concerning the slave-trade, and also to consider the expediency of consulting with other nations, with a view to the entire abolition of that traffic. Mr. Troup of Georgia expressed his readiness to enforce, within the jurisdiction of the United States, the abolition of the African slave-trade, but he was not ready to co-operate with other nations for its suppression. But it was strenuously maintained by Mr. Burrill that the slave-trade could be abolished only by concert and co-operation with other nations. The venerable Rufus King, one of the framers of the Constitution, thought the nation was bound, by its principles and the promises it had made, to go farther than it had ever gone for the suppression of a traffic so abhorrent. He confessed he could not see how co-operation with other nations for this purpose could lead to entangling alliances or jeopardize the country.

Mr. Campbell of Tennessee was opposed to such co-operation. He asked, if we were to unite with France and England to induce Spain and Portugal to give up the slave-trade, and they should refuse, whether we were to attempt to compel them to do it by force of arms. To this Mr. Burrill replied, that no nation would be very likely to go to war for the slave-trade. On the contrary, Spain and Portugal might be influenced by the acts of other countries. It was asserted by Mr. Barbour of Virginia that the State he represented took the lead in the effort "to exterminate the horrible traffic." He feared nothing from an alliance with any nation whose only object was humanity. Through the Executive alone, however, could the proper arrangements be effected with other nations. He then moved to strike out the clause of the resolution seeking the co-operation of other nations.

Mr. Morrill of New Hampshire made an earnest and enthusiastic speech in favor of the termination of slavery itself. He maintained that "we were a Christian nation, that the Bible was our moral guide, that its principles were sacred, its precepts salutary, and its commands obligatory. The frowns of

Heaven and the threatenings of God rested on men for their ingratitude to their fellow-mortals. Babylon the great had fallen, for she had a traffic in the souls of men. To avert the judgments of Heaven, let the inhuman traffic be abolished to the ends of the earth." Senators were reminded by Mr. King that the concert proposed with other nations was not the union of arms, but of opinions, of example, and of influence, for the purpose of inducing Spain and Portugal to accede to the compact already made with other nations, to put an end to the African slave-trade. The motion to strike out the clause relating to concert with other nations was lost by one vote, and the resolution was then adopted.

At the next session, in December, 1818, on motion of Mr. Eaton of Tennessee, the Senate appointed a select committee to inquire whether any and what amendments to existing laws were necessary to prevent the importation of slaves. Early in February Mr. Eaton reported a bill supplementary to the act of 1817.

In the House Mr. Mercer introduced two resolutions calling upon the Navy and Treasury Departments for information concerning the slave-trade. On the 13th of January Mr. Middleton of South Carolina, chairman of the committee to which had been referred so much of the President's message as related to the slave-trade, reported a bill in addition to the several acts prohibiting that traffic. The House proceeded to its consideration. The sections of the bill providing bounties for the crews of vessels capturing slaves imported, and for informers whose evidence should lead to the conviction of smugglers of slaves, were strenuously opposed by Mr. Strother of Virginia; but the bill was defended by Mr. Mercer in all its parts. On motion of Mr. Pindall of the same State, the House amended it so as to punish with death every person who should import, or aid and abet the importation of, any African negro, with intent to sell or use such negro as a slave, or who should purchase such negro so imported. It was then passed. In the Senate Mr. Eaton reported it from the committee with an amendment, striking out the provision making the violation of the law punishable with death. This amendment was agreed



to, the bill was passed, the House concurred, and it became a law.

At the ensuing session in December, 1819, the House appointed a select committee on the slave-trade. Mr. Mercer reported three resolutions authorizing the President to negotiate with foreign powers. The first of the three was agreed to by a large majority, but was lost in the Senate after a brief debate, in which it was earnestly supported by Burrill, King, and Lowrie of Pennsylvania, and opposed by Smith of South Carolina, and Walker and King of Alabama.

In the month of April, 1822, Mr. Gorham of Massachusetts, from the committee to which had been referred so much of the President's message as related to the slave-trade, made an able report, closing with the recommendation that the President be requested to make arrangements with one or more of the maritime powers of Europe for the more effectual suppression of the slave-trade. But this humane proposition was resisted. Mr. Poinsett of South Carolina stated that the resolution was carried by a bare majority of the committee, and that he did not concur in the measure recommended.

At the next session, in December, the President in his annual message again called the attention of Congress to the African slave-trade. On motion of Mr. Taylor of New York that portion of the message was referred to a select committee. Mr. Gorham, who had reported at the previous session in favor of concert with foreign powers, was made chairman. A resolution was introduced by Mr. Mercer, ever an earnest and consistent advocate of measures tending to the utter extinction of the traffic, requesting the President to prosecute negotiations with the maritime powers of Europe and America for its effectual abolition, and for its ultimate denunciation as piracy, under the law of nations, by the consent of the civilized world. He expressed the opinion that not less than thirteen thousand negroes were even then annually smuggled into the Southern States. He emphatically denounced the African slave-trade as a "crime, begun on a barbarous shore, claimed by no civilized state, and subject to no moral law; a remnant of ancient barbarism, a curse extended to the New World by the colonial policy



of the Old." He would fix upon the African slave-dealer the guilt and stigma of being a pirate and a felon, and he implored the House to sustain the policy of such a legal characterization. Mr. Wright of Maryland would have the "government listen to the voice of distressed humanity, and unite with the powers of Europe in a qualified search, proposed by Lord Castlereagh in his noble agency for the suppression of the African slave-trade." Mr. Mercer's resolutions were then agreed to with only nine dissenting votes.

In the House, in December, 1823, so much of the President's message as related to the slave-trade was referred to a select committee, of which Mr. Govan of South Carolina was chairman. On motion of Mr. Mercer, it was instructed to consider the expediency of prohibiting citizens of the United States, under the severe penalties of existing laws, from fitting out slave-trading expeditions in foreign ports. A bill to this effect was reported by the committee, but the House took no action thereupon.

But the representations of President Monroe, the efforts of the humane and just in and out of Congress, did little to arrest the prosecution of a traffic nurtured by the avarice and stimulated by the slave system of the United States. Thus had it ever been. Though the legislation and attempted legislation implied both desire and design to prevent it, they did in fact but keep the promise to the ear and break it to the hope.

As the sensitiveness and jealousies of the slave-masters had rendered abortive all attempts at home to secure practical legislation against the slave-traffic, so were the pretended efforts put forth by the government to accomplish a like object through negotiations with foreign powers equally futile. Though it seemed to be earnest and honest of purpose in its attempts, they never became effective. It always contrived to present its plans and purposes in such shape, or coupled with such conditions, that they never reached any satisfactory conclusion.

In the Treaty of Peace of 1815 it was declared that the traffic in slaves was irreconcilable with the principles of

humanity and justice, that the two governments were desirous of continuing their efforts for its entire abolition ; and the two contracting parties pledged themselves to use their best endeavors to accomplish that object. Three years after the ratification of the treaty Lord Castlereagh proposed to the American Minister, Mr. Rush, to concede to each other's ships of war a qualified right of search, with the power of detaining vessels of either country found with slaves actually on board. To this fair and just proposition a positive refusal had been returned by the American government. In 1819 Parliament requested the Prince Regent to renew his beneficent endeavors with the United States for the suppression of the traffic ; but these practical propositions of the British government did not meet with a favorable response.

On the 29th of January, 1823, Mr. Stratford Canning, the British Minister at Washington, reminded Mr. Adams, Secretary of State, of the pledge given at the Treaty of Ghent, requesting the American government to assent to a plan proposed by Great Britain, or to suggest some other in its stead. He was informed that the United States proposed a mutual stipulation, making the penalty of slave-trading piracy. To this proposition Mr. Canning replied that his government desired that any British subject who defied the law and dishonored his country by engaging in a trade of blood should be detected and brought to justice "even by foreign hands, and from under the protection of her flag." But he proposed that the mutual right of search should be conceded for a limited time, be restricted to certain parts of the ocean, and be confined to a certain number of cruisers on each side, to be proportioned by mutual consent. This proposition, too, so honorable to the British government, was rejected. Despatches, however, were forwarded to France, Spain, Portugal, Russia, Netherlands, Buenos Ayres, and Colombia, expressing the desire of this government to make the slave-trade piracy by the common consent of the civilized world.

In June, 1823, Mr. Rush was instructed to conclude a treaty with Great Britain for the suppression of the slave-trade ; and the draft of a convention was forwarded to him, authorizing

him to propose and conclude a treaty "on the basis of a legislative prohibition of the slave-trade by both parties, under the penalty of piracy." But the British Minister, confident of the action of Parliament, said Mr. Rush in his letter to Mr. Adams, gave "their unhesitating consent to the principle denouncing the slave-trade as piracy." On the 13th of March, 1824, a treaty was signed at London, which was nearly a verbatim draft of that sent from Washington. Parliament hastened to pass an Act in compliance with the conditions exacted by the United States. In this Act it was declared that all British subjects, found guilty of slave-trading, "shall suffer death without benefit of clergy, and loss of lands and goods and chattels, as pirates, felons, and robbers upon the sea ought to suffer." It was provided in this treaty that the cruisers of the United States and Great Britain, on the coast of Africa, America, and the West Indies, might seize slavers under the British or American flag, and send them to the country where they belonged to be tried as pirates.

This treaty, made in the interests of humanity and of civilization, the ratification of which would have been alike honorable to England and America, was laid before the Senate of the United States on the 30th of April. That body hesitated and delayed action. On the 16th of May the British Minister addressed a letter to the Secretary of State, reminding him that the treaty had originated with this government, and that England had, without hesitation, complied with the condition by making the slave-trade piracy. Thus pressed, the President sent a message to the Senate, in which he reminded that body that the rejection of the treaty would subject the nation, the Executive, and Congress to the charge of insincerity and inconsistency. He also expressed the conviction that it would be impossible to detect the pirates without entering and searching the vessels, and that it would be inconsistent in us, with the statute of piracy in our hands, to deny the common right of search for the pirates. But the Senate still hesitated, and, after long debates, changed, mutilated, and then ratified the treaty. So much as provided for the right of search on the coast of America,



and so much as applied to chartered vessels, or to the citizens of either country carrying on the trade under the foreign flag, were stricken out. Few vessels, however, direct from Africa, landed slaves in the United States. They were generally landed on some of the West India Islands and taken to the United States in small vessels; so that all that was necessary for them to do was to charter vessels instead of owning them, and to run up a foreign flag instead of their own. Of course the treaty, thus emasculated, could do little to arrest the trade.

The British government refused to assent to the treaty thus mutilated and weakened, though it offered, through its minister at Washington, to give its assent on the condition of allowing the mutual right of search on the coast of America. To this proposition Mr. Clay, Secretary of State, replied that, from the views entertained by the Senate, it was inexpedient to continue the negotiations. He reminded the British Cabinet that a similar connection had been formed with Colombia on the 10th of December, 1824, the coast of America being excepted from its operation, and yet, notwithstanding this conciliatory feature, the Senate had, by a large majority, refused to ratify it.

This language of Mr. Clay, from his high position, his antecedents, and connection with a Northern President, clearly indicated not only the manifest drift of the government, but the strong pressure upon the aspiring public men of those days. It revealed, too, that of which Mr. Monroe so much dreaded the imputation, the nation's "inconsistency and insincerity." For it became manifest that it not only merited the sarcasm of the British caricature, representing it with the Declaration of Independence in the one hand and a brandished whip over affrighted slaves in the other, but the charge of a pretended interest in an object it did not wish to see accomplished. But why this vacillating and equivocal policy? Foremost among the reasons was, the large and powerful minority in the extreme South, who loved slavery and everything tending to invigorate and support it, — a minority inflexible and imperious in its demands. The Border slave States opposed it, but their opposition was based upon interest rather than upon moral con-



siderations. The Northern States, indeed, opposed it from principle. But there was even there a large commercial class, either implicated in the trade itself, or anxious to conciliate Southern interest and secure Southern favor. This class was never hearty in its opposition to Southern demands, however irrational and extreme. And then there was a class of politicians, ever anxious to obtain and retain power. They were obsequious to those determined Southern men who, with their Northern auxiliaries, then and since, made and unmade parties and their candidates. Surely, from such a composite, harmony and consistency in right, or even in wrong, could hardly be expected. For, diffused everywhere was the recognition of the fact always weakening the right and strengthening the wrong, that slavery and the slave-trade were essentially alike, and that hearty opposition to the latter was illogical and untenable so long as the former was enshrined in the Constitution and protected by the government.

Here, then, lay the difficulty, as here is found the key to the mysteries of American diplomacy. The nation attempted the impossible feat of moving at once in opposite directions, personating on the same stage, at the same time, the angel of liberty and the demon of slavery. Hence its policy was little better than a masquerade, made up of feints and disguises, either cloaking under fair pretences the most shameless of purposes, or, where concealment was impossible, avowing a policy in direct antagonism to every avowed principle of its form of government. Of the British rule in India an English writer has said: "A government cannot be administered according to the standard of the moral law, which violated, in its establishment, every principle of the Decalogue." Equally difficult was it for the government of the United States to do justly and love mercy so long as it was bound by the compromises of the Constitution to recognize and maintain "the sum of all villainies." It could not do right so long as the original sin remained unrepented of and unforsaken.

## CHAPTER IX.

### FOREIGN RELATION OF THE GOVERNMENT INFLUENCED BY SLAVERY.

American Government humiliated by Slavery. — Treaty of 1783. — Demands on England. — Jay's Treaty. — Free Negroes of San Domingo. — Demands of Napoleon. — Monroe Doctrine. — Congress at Panama. — Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. — Debate. — War of 1812. — Randolph's Speech. — Instruction to the Peace Commissioners. — Treaty of Ghent. — Demands on the Commander of the British Squadron. — Position of the British Government. — Persistent Demands of the American Government for Payment of Slaves. — Decision referred to Russia. — Proposed Invasion of Cuba by Mexico. — Intervention of the Government of the United States. — Debate in the Senate. — Instructions of Mr. Clay to the Panama Commissioners.

THE necessities of slavery not only brought it into constant contact with freemen and free institutions at home, but often and seriously disturbed the foreign relations of the American government. Perhaps among the most mischievous and mortifying of its influences was the humiliating attitude in which it placed the nation before the world. Indeed, the saddest page of the history of the Slave Power is the record of the nation's diplomatic correspondence with other governments upon this subject. The persistent and shameless requirements of the slave-masters forced it ever to compromise its dignity, consistency, and conscience by registering their edicts at home, and boisterously demanding their execution abroad. It was not a paid agent indeed, for, like that of the slaves themselves, its service was an unrequited toil, its only rewards being the disgrace it incurred and the increased rigors of the despotism by which it was bound. Even a cursory survey of its course in these foreign relations will reveal ample and mournful evidences of the national subserviency and sacrifices to those vile behests. At the very outset, before the government was fairly launched, or the Treaty of Peace signed, even in the very efforts to secure

it, this solicitude was revealed, as if the conservation of slavery was more important than the salvation of the country.

During the progress of the war many slaves, having escaped from their masters, found refuge on board British vessels, and were carried away. At the critical moment of negotiating this treaty the slave-masters, for both pecuniary and political reasons, seized this most inopportune juncture to press their claims for compensation for such slaves. They found one subservient to their wishes, in Henry Laurens of South Carolina, who was one of the commission, consisting of himself, Franklin, Adams, and Jay, sent to Paris on this important and delicate errand. At his suggestion the seventh article was inserted in the Treaty of Peace, by which it was provided that the British army "should not carry away any negroes or other property."

Mr. Chief Justice Jay was afterward appointed to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce. He was instructed by the government to demand compensation for these slaves. Lord Granville resisted the demand and declined its payment. In communicating the fact to this government Mr. Jay characterized the claim as "an odious one," and the treaty was made without the provision. It consequently encountered stern opposition in the Senate. Mr. Gunn of Georgia presented a resolution affirming that "many negroes and other property" had been carried away by the British army in contravention of the Treaty of Peace. The President was required to renew negotiations to secure indemnity for such losses; and the commissioner was further instructed, if he failed to secure the desired compensation under the treaty, to press the claim on the ground that to grant it would "tend to produce the desired friendship between the two governments." And this pertinacity in its demands was only a representative fact, indicating the deep and determined purpose of the Slave Power, even in its beginnings, to inaugurate a policy that was never remitted, until the power itself was stricken down by the very conflict it had itself evoked in its own behalf.

One of the consequences of the French Revolution was the investiture of the free blacks of San Domingo with the privileges of citizenship. This application of the revolutionary



watchwords of that stormy period, its "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," excited great commotion and opposition in that island, especially among its white inhabitants. This commotion was fostered by British aid, and, with the varying fortunes of war, continued until 1798, when the negroes, left in full possession of the island, free and emancipated, organized the government of Hayti. Though Napoleon sought to resubjugate the island, and sacrificed in the attempt some forty thousand troops, the French commander was forced to surrender to the victorious Haytien armies in 1802, and Hayti became an independent nation, subsequently acknowledged as such by the governments of France and England.

Of course the existence of such a government on the very borders of this nation necessarily provoked demonstrations and responses from the American government. The natural supposition should have been that a government with such an origin and history, with so much resembling its own, would have kindled into a warm and glowing enthusiasm the sympathy and good wishes of the United States. She should have eagerly welcomed this young republic to her side as one of the accompanying fruits of her own struggle. The welcome actually extended was, however, wholly different. Though the Haytien government had been established for several years without the presence of a single hostile soldier, and without even one alleged offence, the American Congress passed, in 1806, an Act to suspend commercial intercourse. The reasons of this unfriendly act against a young republic, trying the experiment of free government under circumstances so peculiar and difficult, were more unworthy than the act itself. The French Emperor, irritated by his defeat and great losses, sought to secure unworthy concessions from the American government, and to gain by diplomacy what he had so signally failed to secure by arms. He meant to starve into subjection a brave people whom he could not coerce. He accordingly demanded of the United States the immediate cessation of commerce with those he styled "the rebels of San Domingo, that race of African slaves, the reproach and refuse of nature," affirming also that he expected "from

the dignity and candor of the government of the Union, that an end be put to it promptly." How was that imperious demand received? With the dignity which should have marked the conduct of a nation basing its claims to nationality on the public proclamation of the great doctrine of human rights and equality? On the contrary, the demanded legislation was rushed through Congress with indecorous haste in less than two months.

The same temper and purpose of the government were exhibited in its attitude towards Hayti in connection with the Panama Congress. In his Annual Message to Congress, in 1823, Mr. Monroe announced as the policy of the United States, that European powers would not be permitted to interfere in the affairs of the nations on the American Continent, and that this continent should not be considered as subject to future colonization by those powers. That declaration, known as the "Monroe doctrine," inspired Mexico and the nations of South America, struggling for independence, with great confidence in the government of the United States. An invitation was extended on the 2d of November, by the Colombian Minister at Washington, to the government of the United States, to send commissioners to the proposed Congress at Panama. Among the topics proposed for consideration was the adoption of more effectual means for "the entire abolition of the African slave-trade, by a more general and uniform co-operation." There was more of force and significance in this request, from the fact that the United States had proposed a convention with Colombia for this very purpose, to which the latter had acceded, though as yet the United States had withheld its final ratification. That invitation was accepted by Mr. Adams; and John Sergeant of Pennsylvania and Richard C. Anderson of Kentucky were nominated as commissioners, and William B. Rochester of New York as secretary. The President in his first Annual Message, in 1825, called the attention of Congress to the Panama Mission, and so much of his Message as related to that subject was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. It had been announced in the invitation, that among the subjects to be considered at

Panama were the slave-trade and the condition of Hayti, Cuba, and Porto Rico. This committee, through its chairman, Mr. Macon of North Carolina, made an elaborate report, written by Mr. Tazewell of Virginia, a member of the committee, against the expediency of the mission. The proposition to meet the South American States in the proposed Congress at Panama intensely excited and aroused the slaveholding interests. The Committee on Foreign Affairs consequently embodied and expressed in their report the opinions and purposes of the Slave Power. The committee declared that the policy of the government towards Hayti had been fixed for more than a third of a century. "We purchase," says the report, "coffee from her and pay for it; but we interchange no consuls or ministers. We receive no mulatto consuls or black ambassadors from her; and why? Because the peace of eleven States in this Union will not permit the fruits of a successful negro insurrection to be exhibited among them. It will not permit black consuls and ambassadors to establish themselves in our cities, and to parade through our country, and to give their fellow-blacks in the United States proof in hand of the honors that await them in a like successful effort on their part. It will not permit the fact to be seen and told, that for the murder of their masters and mistresses they are to find friends among the white people of the United States." The report proceeded to declare emphatically that the question of Haytien independence had been determined; that it could not be discussed "in this chamber on this day"; and that Congress should not advise and consult in a council with five nations, who had put a black man on an equality with the white,—"five nations, who have at this moment black generals in their armies and mulatto members in their congresses."

The report of the committee, declaring it inexpedient to send commissioners to Panama, was defeated by five majority, and the Senate, on motion of Mr. Mills of Massachusetts, proceeded to consider the nominations. The question elicited a very able debate, in which senators representing the interests of slavery enunciated very explicitly the opinions and



purposes of the slaveholding oligarchy. In that debate Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina took the lead. He asserted that the question of slavery was a domestic question, and that the language of the United States to foreign nations ought to be, "We cannot permit it to be touched." He declared that he considered the rights of the slaveholding States "in that species of property as not open to discussion either here or elsewhere"; that "to call into question our rights is grossly to violate them, to attempt to instruct us on this subject is to insult us, to dare to assail our institutions is wantonly to invade our peace." As to the slave-trade, he congratulated the Senate that treaties with England and Colombia had failed. He said that the question of the independence of Hayti could not be considered in connection with revolutionary governments, who had marched to victory under universal emancipation, and had colored men at the head of their armies, in their legislative halls, and in their executive departments. He insisted that the government should direct "all our ministers in South America and Mexico to protest against the independence of Hayti." He denounced Mr. Sergeant as "a distinguished advocate of the Missouri restriction, an acknowledged abolitionist," sent to plead the cause of the South at the Congress of Panama.

Mr. Hamilton of South Carolina affirmed the sentiments of the Southern people to be that "Haytien independence is not to be tolerated in any form." Mr. Johnson of Louisiana was equally explicit and decided. Indeed, he went a step further, and avowed that the nation should not recognize the independence of Hayti, but that it should remonstrate with the South American governments and Mexico against such acknowledgment.

In 1838, twelve years later, a petition was presented, praying for the usual recognition of international relations with that republic. But it was received with the same hostile demonstrations. Mr. Legaré of South Carolina characterized the petition as treason, and the petitioners "as traitors, not to their country only, but to the whole human race." Mr. Wise of Virginia was equally violent, denouncing the desire as

"the abolition spirit" that would have men of such an origin recognized by commercial and international reciprocity. "Nor would he do it," he said, "if they had been free for centuries." And this persistent and intolerant opposition was maintained before the world, not only to the manifest damage of national reputation, but also to the detriment of the commercial interests of the country. "We stand aloof," says Mr. Grennell, "as if they were a lawless tribe of savages. While all other powers have long since acknowledged them as an independent sovereignty, we refuse to recognize them. Others profit by their commerce at our expense."

The war of 1812 against England, in its inception, progress, and final treaty of peace, afforded another occasion for similar demonstrations on the part of the slave interest, and a similar subserviency on the part of the government. The number of slaves at the time of the declaration of war exceeded twelve hundred thousand. From the organization of the government under the Constitution, in 1789, they had doubled in numbers and increased at least fivefold in value. Although the slave-trade had been prohibited for more than four years, several thousands of slaves were annually smuggled into the country, and the domestic slave-trade had largely increased under the stimulating influences of the Louisiana purchase, the opening of new lands, and the rapid increase of the cotton culture. The South, then under the complete control of the slave-masters, was gaining a like ascendancy over the Federal government, and a dominating influence over the non-slaveholding States.

On the eve of the declaration of war John Randolph, speaking in opposition to it, bitterly denounced the idea of a war for maritime rights, by the invasion of Canada, while the coast of the Southern States was exposed to the enemy. "While talking," he said, "of Canada, we have too much reason to shudder for our safety at home. I speak from facts, when I say that the night bell never tolls for fire in Richmond, that the frightened mother does not hug her infant more closely to her bosom, not knowing what may have happened." He denounced "the infernal principles of French fraternity," declared that there

were not "wanting members of this House to preach on this floor the doctrine of imprescriptible rights to a crowded audience of blacks in the galleries; teaching them that they are equal to their masters; in other words, advising them to cut their masters' throats." Similar doctrines, he said, are spread throughout the South by Yankee pedlers; and there are even owners of slaves so infatuated as, by the general tenor of their conversation, by their contempt of order, morality, and religion, unthinkingly to cherish these seeds of destruction. He asserted that the whole South had been thrown, by the spreading of these infernal doctrines, into a state of insecurity, and that men, dead to the operation of moral causes, had taken from the slave the habits of loyalty and obedience which lightened his servitude, and were now trusting to "the mere physical strength of the shackle" that holds him. "You have deprived him of all moral restraint," he said; "you have tempted him to eat of the tree of knowledge just enough to perfect him in wickedness; you have opened his eyes to his nakedness; you have roused his nature against the hand that has fed him and has clothed him and has cherished him in sickness, — that hand which, before he became a pupil in your school, he was accustomed to press to his lips with respectful affection; you have done all this, — and now you point him to the whip and the gibbet as incentives to sullen, reluctant obedience." He said there was not a spot on all the shores of the Chesapeake Bay, the city of Baltimore alone excepted, safe from attack or capable of defence; and he expressed the hope that God would forbid that the Southern States should ever see on their shores an enemy with these "infernal principles of French fraternity" in the van.

Whether the slaves had imbibed the infernal principles of French fraternity or not, many availed themselves of the presence of British blockading vessels in Southern waters, especially in the Chesapeake Bay, to leave the enforced service of American masters and accept offers to enter the British service, or to become free settlers in the British Possessions. It is stated by Mr. Hildreth, in his History of the United States, that a plan to take possession of the isthmus between



the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays, and there train a black army, was only rejected because the British, being slaveholders themselves, did not like to encourage insurrection elsewhere.

In the year 1814 peace commissioners were appointed. In the instructions given these commissioners by Mr. Monroe, Secretary of State, they were directed to be watchful of the interests of the slaveholders. In his instructions of the 28th of January, 1814, he said "the negroes, taken from the Southern States, should be returned to their owners, or paid for at their full value." Indeed, this was one of the conditions on which they were to insist in the proposed negotiations. In the treaty of peace, negotiated at Ghent, the restoration of slaves was expressly provided for. When it was ratified, on the 17th of February, 1815, three commissioners were immediately appointed, to repair at once to the British squadron in the Chesapeake Bay, with authority to receive absconding slaves on board such vessels. The commander of the squadron promptly and peremptorily refused their surrender. The officer in temporary command maintained that the treaty had no reference to slaves who had sought protection on board British vessels, and that it only applied to slaves "originally captured in forts or places, and who were remaining in such forts or places at the time of its ratification by the two governments."

On the arrival of Admiral Cockburn the demand was renewed; but he gave the same interpretation to the treaty, though at the same time he surrendered eighty slaves found on Cumberland Island when it was captured by the British forces, and who had not been removed at the time of the ratification of the treaty. Mr. Monroe, Secretary of State, at once applied to the English *Chargé des Affaires* at Washington, requesting him to direct the British naval commander to surrender the fugitives. But that officer, putting the same construction upon the treaty as had been put upon it by the British naval officers, refused to comply with the request. The British squadron sailing for Bermuda with the fugitives on board, the government immediately despatched an agent, with authority to demand of the governor of that island their surrender.

To this demand of the government of the United States for the surrender of men who had sought liberty and protection under the flag of England, the British governor emphatically replied that he "would rather Bermuda, with every man, woman, and child in it, were sunk under the sea, than surrender one slave that had sought protection under the flag of England." Notwithstanding this brave and manly response, worthy alike of the individual and of the representative of the British government, the American agent still persisted in his claim, and addressed the Admiral then in those waters, offering to furnish him a list of the slaves. But Admiral Griffith assured Mr. Spaulding, the agent of the United States, that there was no one at Bermuda or any other British port "competent to deliver up persons who, during the late wars, had placed themselves under the protection of the British flag." Repulsed by both the civil and naval officers of England, the government of the United States demanded of the British Cabinet the execution of the treaty, as it understood it, by the surrender of fugitive slaves who had taken refuge from oppression on board the vessels of that government. But the demand was promptly rejected, and the American government was assured by Lord Castlereagh that England would never have consented to a treaty that required the delivery of persons who had sought its protection.

The government of the United States, completely dominated by the slaveholders, persisting in its demands, the British government consented to refer the question to the decision of the Emperor of Russia. The Emperor decided in favor of the construction of the treaty made by the American government. After further negotiations it was decided that commissioners should be appointed, who should hold their sessions in Washington, receive and adjust the claims presented, and decide upon the number and value of the slaves. The commissioners, on the part of the United States, insisting on interest, further negotiations were entered into, and the British government paid over, by the convention of November, 1826, more than twelve hundred thousand dollars, in full of all demands. Thus, during nearly twelve years, the government of

the United States pressed upon the British government the payment in full for persons who had fled from the cruelty and nameless wrongs of chattel slavery and found freedom and protection on the decks of the British navy. To secure the re-enslavement of the escaping fugitives, or payment in full for the souls and bodies of these victims of oppression, the American government made its demands at the negotiations at Ghent, pressed them on British admirals, governors, *chargé des affaires*, and the British Cabinet, before the imperial master of Russia, and even higgled for interest before the joint commission appointed to adjust and fix the price of human chattels.



## CHAPTER X.

### INDIAN POLICY AFFECTED BY SLAVERY. — EXILES OF FLORIDA.

Disgraceful Attitude of the Nation. — Escape of Slaves into Florida. — Return of Fugitives refused. — Commissioners to negotiate a Treaty with the Creeks. — Action of Georgia. — Protection demanded. — Failure of Negotiations. — Treaty negotiated at New York. — Stipulation for the Return of Slaves. — Spanish Authorities refuse to surrender Slaves. — Misconduct of Georgia. — Claims on England for Fugitive Slaves. — Commissioners appointed to meet the Creeks in Washington. — Annexation of Florida pressed by the Slave Power. — Amelia Island seized by Georgia. — Expedition sent by Georgia into Florida to capture Fugitives. — Raid into Florida. — Negro Fort. — Order of General Jackson to invade Florida. — Negro Fort captured. — Exiles killed, captured, and reduced to Slavery. — Disgrace of the Nation. — General Jackson enters Florida. — Defeats the Indians. — Acquisition of Florida. — Treaty of Indian Spring. — Treaty of Camp Moultrie. — Seizure of Slaves. — Fugitives captured by the Army. — Slave-catchers permitted to hunt Slaves.

It was a standing charge against the Abolitionists that they over-estimated the evils of slavery, exaggerated the wrongs of the slave, the guilt of the master, and the complicity of the government. No accusation was ever more unfounded. The half was never told. As the civil war revealed a demoralization of slaveholding society never attributed to it or dreamed of, so do careful researches into the history of the country unfold a course of procedure indefensible according to any standard of morality, however low, and unrelieved by any acts of generosity, humanity, or true dignity of character. The disgraceful and humiliating attitude of the government in its dealings with foreign powers whenever the interests of slavery were involved have been traced already. Its intercourse with the Indians, whenever these interests were in issue, has exhibited the same determined devotion to the system, coupled with deeds of wanton injustice and cruelty towards a few savages, whose real offence was that of giving food and shelter to black men escaping from their masters.

Spanish settlements were made in Florida in the year 1558, and slaves were soon after introduced. Subsequently settlements were made on the Appalachicola River by slaves escaping from South Carolina and finding refuge there. Obtaining lands from the Spanish government, they became a part of the military defences of the country. They also found asylums among the Creek Indians in the State of Georgia. As early as 1738 South Carolina demanded of Georgia a return of these fugitives ; but the demand was promptly rejected.

Early, too, slaves escaping from their masters in Georgia found refuge with the Creeks, and with the fugitive slaves there formed settlements upon the Appalachicola and Suwanee rivers, acquired property and became the owners of flocks and herds. Indeed, so frequent and annoying did these escapes become, that the Council of Safety early sent a communication to the Continental Congress, asking for troops to prevent them. General Lee, too, called the attention of Congress to the same evil, and also to the fact that these escaping fugitives were finding asylums among the Indians and the Florida exiles. Commissioners were, in consequence, appointed in 1785 to negotiate a treaty with the Creek Indians. They were met at Galphinton by commissioners from Georgia. These latter demanded a stipulation for the return of the slaves who were then with the Indians, and of any who might thereafter escape. As the Creeks were not represented, the United States commissioners declined to act, and retired. After they had left, however, the Georgia commissioners, in direct violation of the Articles of Confederation, made a treaty with the representatives of two townships, out of about one hundred belonging to the Creek nation. This treaty, negotiated by persons without authority on either part, provided that the Indians should restore all negroes who were then or might thereafter come among them, belonging to citizens of Georgia. The commissioners, reporting their action to the legislature of their State, received its formal thanks for what was done in plain and palpable violation of its confederate obligations, while the same body recorded their condemnation of the United States commissioners, because they refused to be parties to a treaty so fraudulent and unauthorized.

In attempting to enforce this treaty Georgia became involved in Indian hostilities, forcing then, as so frequently afterwards, the general government to action, and to espousal of her high-handed assaults, not merely upon the poor Creeks, but upon itself, as it stooped to the ignoble service of recording and enforcing the edicts of that ever-grasping and contumacious State. The commissioners who were previously appointed were now instructed to negotiate a treaty which should restore all fugitive slaves belonging to citizens of the United States.

On the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, the authorities of Georgia called upon the Federal government for protection against the Indians, from whom she claimed territory ostensibly ceded by the treaties of Galphinton and Shoulder Bone, though they were wrongfully obtained and promptly repudiated by those not fairly represented in the fraudulent transactions. President Washington appointed commissioners, and the governor of Georgia placed in their hands the names of one hundred and ten negroes, alleged to have left their masters during the Revolution, and to have found an asylum among the Indians. Though they were received with great respect by the Indians, their attempts at negotiation failed. Colonel Willett, a Revolutionary officer, was then sent, who succeeded in inducing a delegation to visit New York, where a treaty was negotiated in August, 1790. Framed in the interests of Georgia slaveholders, it stipulated for the return of absconding slaves. Thus, by a characteristic fatality and fatuity, which have ever marked its self-assumed vassalage under the new Constitution, the government placed the brand of its own dishonor upon its first exercise of the treaty-making power, by prosecuting its negotiations clearly and confessedly in behalf of slavery. By this treaty the Creek nation pledged itself to deliver to the commander of the United States forces, stationed at a specified point, all negroes held by them ; and it was further provided that if they were not delivered before the 1st of June, 1791, the governor of Georgia might send three persons to claim and receive them. By this treaty, also, which the President fondly hoped had laid the foundations of the future peace and prosperity of the Southwestern frontier,



the Creeks had made stipulations, claiming not only to bind the Seminoles, another tribe, but that tribe residing in Florida and under the jurisdiction of Spain. These latter, however, denied this assumed authority, and utterly repudiated the provisions of the treaty the Creeks had presumed to make. Of course the latter could not fulfil its stipulations without invading Florida and forcibly seizing those who had sought to secure their freedom under the Spanish crown.

In consequence of the persistent urgency of the Georgia slaveholders, an agent was sent by the Creeks to negotiate for the return of the exiles, but the Spanish authorities peremptorily refused to surrender them again to slavery. The treaty being thus repudiated by the Spanish authorities and the exiles, Georgia, failing to secure her escaping slaves, denounced it herself, and declared that she would not be bound by what had been adopted without consultation with her commissioners. Accordingly she sent a military force into the Creek country, attacked one of their towns, killed some of the people, and burned their dwellings. If this conduct could be stripped of all the accessories of governmental prestige, and the forms and dialect of courts, and be tested by the principles and claims of simple morality, as applied to the ordinary rules of human conduct, it would be difficult to equal it by any examples of selfishness, dishonesty, wanton cruelty, and disregard of the clearest claims of humanity, equity, and fair dealing. And yet, notwithstanding all this, General Knox, Secretary of War, in 1794, recommended to the President that Congress should make an appropriation for the owners of these exiles, — a proposition indorsed by Washington in a special message in its favor. No action, however, was taken.

By the Treaty of Peace it had been stipulated that the British forces, in retiring from the country, should not carry away any negroes or other property. The Southern slaveholders, who had lost several thousands of slaves during the war, were inspired with confidence that they would receive compensation also for those who had escaped to the British West Indies, and for those who had enlisted in the British army. The British ministry, however, firmly refused to negotiate for any such



indemnification. Exasperated by this refusal, they pressed their claims with still greater pertinacity, and by so doing greatly embarrassed the successive administrations of the general government. Failing to defeat Jay's Treaty, which they opposed because it did not secure payment for their absconding slaves, the Georgia slaveholders grew more and more clamorous for the return of slaves who had found refuge in Florida. For, increasing in numbers and prosperity, they exerted no inconsiderable influence upon their neighboring bondmen, who very naturally desired to share with them the blessings of freedom. Pressed, therefore, by the clamorous demands of the slaveholders, Washington, in 1796, appointed commissioners to meet the chiefs and head men of the Creeks at Colerain, for the purpose of forming a new treaty. This council was attended by commissioners on the part of Georgia who, failing in their attempts to control by their dictation the commissioners of the United States, left the council before the close of its deliberations. The chiefs of the Creek nation maintained that they were bound only to return negroes captured after the Treaty of Peace. They declared that they had delivered up all they could, and they expressed their willingness at some future time to deliver up other negroes, when they could do so. Yet, neither the commissioners of the United States nor of the Indian chiefs at this council said anything about delivering up the exiles who had fled into Florida; nor is there any evidence that the commissioners of Georgia, at this council, insisted on the obligations of the Creeks to return the negroes residing with the Seminoles in Florida.

Nor was there any other than the robber's right to make any such demand. For nearly half a century — from 1750, when the Seminoles left Georgia — they had refused any allegiance to that State, had maintained their independence, and had received the protection of the Spanish government. Such a denial of prerogative, and such a maintenance of independence for so long a time, would have been sufficient answer to any such claim among civilized nations. Could the far less obvious and less defined coherence among savage tribes perpetuate an allegiance persistently denied, and invalidate an

independence so long and so stoutly maintained? Surely, naught but the exigencies of slavery and the sublime impudence of its defenders could ever have conceived of such a claim, much less have maintained it. And yet the unquestionably false allegation that the treaty of New York recognized that claim was adhered to, and the interpretation of Georgia then and years afterward was persisted in, that the Seminoles were bound by this alleged compact of the Creeks, though they were living under Spanish rule.

Little was done, however, during the administrations of Adams and Jefferson, to disturb these exiles, and they increased in numbers and prosperity. But in 1802 it was enacted, in a new law regulating intercourse with Indian tribes, that the value of any slave escaping and taking up his residence with any Indian tribe in the United States should be secured to his master. Of course the slaves, who had escaped into Florida from Georgia, with their children and grandchildren around them, excited the cupidity and hostility of the Georgia slaveholders. But living on Spanish soil, and under the protection of Spanish laws, they were beyond their reach. To seek their re-enslavement by obtaining jurisdiction over this territory became, then, the object of effort. The annexation of Florida was, therefore, warmly pressed by the slaveholding interest upon the government. Consequently a law was passed in secret session, in 1811, for taking possession of Florida; and General Matthews, a Georgia slaveholder, without either permission or negotiation, took possession of Amelia Island. The government of Spain, of course, remonstrated, and the act was disavowed by the President. Matthews was recalled, and Governor Mitchell appointed a commissioner, who continued to hold forcible possession of the island, in violation of the claims of national comity and good faith towards the Spanish government.

In 1812 the governor of Georgia, in like violation of national faith, sent an armed force into Florida, under the command of the adjutant-general of that State, for the utterly indefensible and outrageous purpose of exterminating the Seminoles, and recapturing the slaves whom the Indians would

not surrender. But this force, meeting with little success, was obliged to return after having stolen a large number of slaves from their Spanish masters. Those thus deprived of their slaves urged their demands for compensation ; and thirty years afterward John Quincy Adams presented a list of more than ninety slaves thus stolen. Georgia, still persisting in its purpose, resolved, through its legislature, that Florida was necessary to its safety, and an act was passed to raise a military force to reduce St. Augustine, and punish the Indians. A military force was therefore raised, and another raid into Spanish territory was made, a few towns were burned, and cornfields were destroyed ; but the expedition returned, unable either to conquer Florida, exterminate the Seminoles, or capture the hated exiles.

Another circumstance occurred soon after, not only exhibiting the same determination on the part of the slaveholders, but the humiliating alacrity of the general government to do their bidding and execute their ignoble purpose upon the unoffending blacks and their kind protectors. During the war of 1812 a small British force, under Lieutenant-Colonel Nichols, landed in Florida, and built a fort upon the Appalachicola River. After the close of the war and the withdrawal of the British forces this fort was left in possession of the exiles, whose plantations extended for many miles up the river. In the month of May, 1815, General Gaines, commanding on the Southern frontier, wrote to the Secretary of War that these exiles had taken possession of that fort. He and other officers kept watch of this " negro fort," and in their correspondence with the government denounced the negroes as runaways and outlaws, although they had committed no offence, and were peaceably pursuing their own affairs.

This fort, though sixty miles from the frontiers of the United States, greatly excited the attention of the military authorities, who, like the government, were in full sympathy with the slaveholders. In the month of May, 1816, General Jackson wrote to General Gaines that the fort " ought to be blown up, regardless of the ground on which it stands ; and," he added, " if your mind has formed the same conclusion, destroy it, and



return the stolen negroes and property to their rightful owners." This permission to invade the territory of a power with which the nation was at peace was promptly acted upon by General Gaines. Colonel Clinch with his regiment and a few hundred Creek Indians, under McIntosh, one of their chiefs, entered Florida literally "to blow up the fort and return the negroes to their rightful owners." Commodore Patterson detailed Sailing-Master Lewis, with two gunboats, to assist the military forces in this slave-catching foray. This military and naval force, on the 27th of July, assaulted this "negro fort," in which had gathered three hundred and thirty-four persons, many of whom were women and children, nearly all being either negroes who had escaped from the United States or their descendants. After a brief cannonade a hot shot entered the powder-magazine, which blew up, instantly killing two hundred and seventy, and injuring all but three others. Monette, in his "History of the Valley of the Mississippi," says that nearly the whole of the inmates were involved in indiscriminate destruction; not one sixth of the whole escaped. "The cries of the wounded, the groans of the dying, with the shouts and yells of the Indians, rendered the scene horrible beyond description." Those who recovered from their wounds were delivered over to claimants in Georgia. In some instances they were given up to the descendants of those who claimed to have owned their ancestors generations before.

More than twenty years afterward Congress assumed the responsibility and guilt of this wicked and wanton act, and passed without opposition a bill giving five thousand dollars to the officers and crews of the gunboats for their gallant conduct in this brutal and bloody massacre, which will stand, in the words of Mr. Giddings, in his "Exiles of Florida," "as one of the darkest crimes which stains the history of any civilized nation." In this massacre it is estimated that more than one third of the Florida exiles perished, or were re-enslaved. Mr. Clay and other senators and representatives condemned this lawless invasion of Florida, as an act of hostility towards Spain; but not a voice was raised in condemnation of those atrocities against the weak and comparatively defenceless

blacks and the Indian friends who shared their fate. So strangely oblivious had the nation become to the simplest claims of humanity and justice.

Outrages so violent and unprovoked could of necessity be neither forgotten nor easily forgiven. The sense of such wronged and outraged humanity rankled in the breasts of the Indians, and they could not but retaliate, however hopeless their condition, and however mad their attempt against a people so much their superior in numbers and in the arts of warfare. They did retaliate, though but feebly; and yet their hostile demonstrations were seized upon as an occasion for sending forces into their country in plain violation of international law. In 1817 General Gaines was ordered to enter Florida, and General Jackson took the field for the subjugation of the Indians and the exiles. With a large force the latter entered the country in April, 1818, defeated the Indians and exiles, and destroyed several of their towns. The negroes, knowing there was no alternative but death or slavery, fought bravely in several actions, but were finally defeated at Suwanee River. The survivors retired towards the more southern portions of the Territory. More than half of the exiles had perished, and a vast amount of wretchedness was occasioned by this lawless, cruel, and wicked invasion. Not only were all domestic quiet and thrift at an end, and the productive industry of these people checked, but their flocks, herds, and other property were destroyed. An inconsiderable number were captured and returned to their greedy masters. But as a people they were unconquered. They had set the government at defiance, and had baffled all its attempts to subjugate them. Besides, slaves still escaping from Georgia and Alabama were soon added to their numbers, and they seemed to the excited and sensitive slave-masters a growing menace on their southern border.

Baffled in their appeal to arms, the slave-masters were not disheartened, but determined to seek through diplomacy what they could not gain by military achievements. They therefore demanded the annexation of Florida, and an obsequious government purchased it by yielding its claim to Texas; and

thus the Seminoles and the exiles of Florida were brought under a control they so much dreaded, and had so much reason to dread. As if that were not enough, the slaveholders pressed with redoubled and scandalous importunity their claims of indemnity for the slaves they had lost. Consequently, under the direction of Mr. Calhoun, Secretary of War, a treaty was negotiated in 1821, with the Creek Indians at "Indian Spring." By this treaty five millions of acres of valuable land were ceded, and two hundred and fifty thousand dollars were set apart for the payment for slaves claimed by Georgia. Out of this fund the claims of Georgia were paid in 1822. Thus Georgia, instead of the punishment she so richly deserved for her violent and disloyal conduct towards the general government, as well as for her wanton outrages upon the Indians and the exiles, was paid for her slaves from the proceeds of lands thus extorted from the helpless victims of superior force; and though the amount received, according to Attorney-General Wirt, was three times their actual value, yet they clamored for the one hundred and forty-one thousand dollars held by the United States, which really belonged to the Creeks. And this sum was afterwards paid to them.

In September, 1822, General Jackson proposed another outrage and act of tyrannous oppression upon the Seminoles; that they should be united with the Creeks and returned to the Creek nation, because, he said, these Indian settlements "would be a perpetual harbor for our slaves." He also declared that "these runaway slaves must be removed from the Floridas, or scenes of murder and confusion will exist." In negotiating the "Indian Spring" treaty with the Creeks, that nation, as seen above, was held responsible for the conduct of the Seminoles, who against their earnest protest were deemed and held a part of the nation. But having obtained compensation for runaway slaves from the Creeks, the government, with shameless audacity, changed its position and assumed that the Seminoles were an independent people. The interests of slavery demanded this; and Mr. Calhoun, regardless of the inconsistencies into which it might lead him, was



ever true to slavery. A treaty was negotiated with the Seminoles in September, 1823, at Camp Moultrie. By this treaty the Indians were to retire from the coast, where were their homes and property and the graves of their dead, and occupy a country south of Tampa Bay, where they were promised protection by the government of the United States against "all persons whatsoever."

By this treaty the Seminoles were compelled to stipulate "to be active and vigilant in preventing the retreating to or passing through the country assigned them of any absconding slave or fugitive from justice; and they further agree to use all necessary exertions to apprehend and deliver the same to the agent, who shall receive orders to compensate them agreeably to the trouble and expense incurred." The country which the exiles had cultivated and bravely defended was given up to white men, and they were compelled to retire and find their homes in the swamps and forests of the interior. Unscrupulous oppressors not only seized the possessions of their escaped fugitives, but whenever they could seize the fugitives themselves they made them their slaves. Slave-catchers sought by fraud and violence to obtain possession of those negroes wherever they could be found, as the presumption of law was that every black man was a slave unless he could prove himself free. The Indians held a few slaves, and these were often seized by the whites. They justly complained, but having no knowledge of legal proceedings, had no remedy.

The Secretary of War, in 1825, issued an order concerning fugitive slaves among the Seminoles, and directed the Indian agent at Tallahassee to take measures to enable the slave claimants to identify their property so that it might be immediately restored. This Indian agent, in obedience to his instructions, emphatically declared: "Let the chiefs distinctly understand that they are not to harbor runaway negroes, and that they will be required to give up such negroes as are now residing within their limits." The military forces of the United States being openly detailed to arrest fugitives, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at Washington, in 1827, wrote to the Indian agent in Florida, reproving him for his remissness

in making such captures. He even went so far as to decide particular cases, and to order the agent in Florida to capture certain slaves then claimed by certain persons. The Indian chiefs complained that, contrary to the stipulations of the treaty made at Camp Moultrie, white men were in their country searching for slaves. To these remonstrances of the savage chief against the violation of the treaty the agent of the United States had no other reply to make than to state the fact that they were there by permission given them by the Secretary of War. Thus these slave-catchers, unscrupulous, heartless, and cruel, with the simple intent to make money, were by the permission of the government roaming over the Indian country, contrary to the sacred guaranties of the nation. The rapacity of the slave-traders increased, and outrages perpetrated upon the negroes and Indians continued. A complete despotism reigned. The Indians became alarmed and indignant at these persistent aggressions, and war seemed again inevitable.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE MISSOURI STRUGGLE. — THE COMPROMISES.

The Louisiana Purchase. — Missouri Territory. — Bill authorizing the Territory to form a Constitution. — Mr. Tallmadge's Amendment prohibiting Slavery. — Exciting Debate. — Amendment agreed to. — Inhibition of Slavery stricken out by the Senate. — Bill lost. — Territory of Arkansas organized. — Mr. Taylor's Amendment. — Bill introduced by Mr. Scott to authorize Missouri to form a Constitution. — Maine and Missouri united in the Senate. — Mr. Roberts's Amendment for the Inhibition of Slavery. — Debate in the Senate. — Mr. Thomas's Amendment. — Amendment agreed to. — Bill passed the Senate. — House disagree to Senate's Amendment. — Mr. Taylor's Amendment. — Bill passed. — Conference Committee. — Prohibition of Slavery defeated in the House. — Prohibition of Slavery north of the Parallel of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  agreed to. — Triumph of the Slave Power complete.

THE necessities of the West and the permanent interests of the nation required that the United States should possess and control the Mississippi River from its sources to the Gulf. The acquisition of Louisiana in 1803, by which that control was obtained, with the full possession of a vast and fertile territory, was a measure of transcendent importance. Wherever settlements had been made, however, slavery had gained a foothold, and it soon became apparent that the geographical position and fertile soil of this extensive domain would greatly strengthen the slaveholders, who had already secured a large if not a commanding influence in the general government. They who believed in the perpetuity of the system, and desired to see it protected and strengthened, enthusiastically welcomed this large addition of territory, with the increased value of their slaves which it promised, and the augmentation of political power it foretokened. But far-seeing statesmen in the North, though conceding the national advantages of the purchase, rightly dreaded, as the event proved, its influence on the free institutions of the country. They plainly



foresaw that it would intensify the haughty and exacting spirit of the class that had assumed, all too successfully, to direct and give character to the policy of the government.

The Louisiana purchase was divided by act of Congress into two territories by the thirty-third parallel of latitude. That part which lay south of the parallel was called Orleans, and the part which lay north of it was called Louisiana. When the Territory of Orleans was admitted as a State, in 1812, it was called Louisiana, and the Louisiana Territory received the name of the Missouri Territory.

On the 16th of March, 1818, petitions were presented to the House of Representatives by citizens of Missouri, praying that the Territory might be permitted to form a constitution and be admitted into the Union. These memorials were referred to a select committee, of which Mr. Scott, Territorial Delegate, was chairman. This committee reported a bill on the 3d of April; but no action was taken at that session. At the next session a memorial was received from the Territorial legislature, praying that Missouri might be permitted to form a State constitution; and the House, in February, 1819, proceeded to the consideration of a bill to authorize it to form a constitution and enter the Union.

Mr. Tallmadge of New York offered an amendment providing that all persons born after the admission of the State should be free; and also providing for the gradual emancipation of persons then held as slaves. This amendment led to a sharp and prolonged debate, when Mr. Tallmadge modified his amendment so as to provide that the further introduction of slavery be prohibited, and that all children born within the State after its admission shall be free at the age of twenty-five years. Mr. John W. Taylor of New York, afterward Speaker of the House, maintained that Congress had full power to prohibit the introduction of slavery as a condition of admission, and that it would be wise to use that power. He reminded the opponents of prohibition that they had often disclaimed the sin of the original introduction of slavery, and had thrown it back upon their ancestors. "If they have tried slavery," he said, "and found it a curse; if they desire to dissipate the gloom

with which it covers their land, I call upon them to exclude it from the territory in question, — plant not its seeds in this uncorrupt soil ; let not our children, looking back to the proceedings of this day, say of us, as we have been constrained to say of our fathers, ‘ We wish their decision had been different.’ ”

Mr. Clay, then Speaker of the House, earnestly opposed the amendment, and emphatically asserted that Congress had no right whatever to prescribe any condition to the newly organized States, but must admit them by a single act, leaving their sovereign rights unrestricted. Mr. Fuller of Massachusetts, a lawyer of eminence, father of Margaret Fuller D’Ossoli, thought the amendment implied nothing more than that the constitution of Missouri should be republican. He maintained with clearness and ability that the exclusion of all colored men from political freedom and making them property was a palpable invasion of right and an utter abandonment of principle and duty.

It was strenuously maintained by Philip P. Barbour of Virginia, afterward Speaker of the House and judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, that Congress had no constitutional right to enact the proposed amendment ; and, if it had the power, it would be highly impolitic and unjust to exercise it. This eminent lawyer and jurist, however, expressly admitted that Congress, having the power to make all needful rules and regulations respecting the Territories, had also the power to “ establish the principle now proposed ” in the embryo State, while it continued to be a Territory.

“ An opportunity is now presented,” said Mr. Livermore of New Hampshire, “ if not to diminish, at least to prevent the growth of a sin that sits heavy on the soul of every one of us. By embracing this opportunity we may retrieve the national character, and in some degree our own. But if we suffer it to pass unimproved, let us at least be consistent, and declare that our Constitution was made to impose slavery, and not to establish liberty. Let us no longer tell idle tales about the abolition of slavery ; away with colonization societies, if their design is only to rid us of free blacks and turbulent slaves. Have done, also, with Bible societies, whose views are extended

to Africa and the East Indies, while they overlook the deplorable condition of our sable brethren within our own borders. Make no more laws to prohibit the importation of the slaves, for the world must see that the object of such laws is alone to prohibit the glutting of a prodigious market of the flesh and blood of man, which we are about to establish in the West, and to enhance the price of sturdy wretches, raised like black cattle and horses, on our own plantations, for sale." The amendment was sustained by the Committee of the Whole by a vote of seventy-nine to sixty-seven.

On the 16th of the same month this earnest and exciting debate was resumed. Mr. Scott, the delegate from Missouri, spoke at great length against the prohibition of slavery. He talked of the Ides of March, and warned Congress that the amendment was "big with the fate of Cæsar and of Rome." Mr. Colston of Virginia was especially excited and violent. He accused Mr. Livermore of speaking to the galleries, and, by his language, of attempting to excite a servile war; and insolently declared that he was "no better than Arbuthnot and Ambrister, and deserved no better fate." During that debate Mr. Cobb of Georgia asserted with much feeling that if the friends of the amendment persisted the Union would be dissolved. "They were kindling a fire," he said, "which all the waters of the ocean could not extinguish. It could be extinguished only in blood."

The debate was closed by the mover of the amendment in a speech of great boldness and vigor. In reply to Mr. Cobb he said: "If a dissolution of the Union must take place, let it be so! If civil war, which gentlemen so much threaten, must come, I can only say, Let it come! My hold on life is probably as frail as any man who hears me; but while that life lasts it shall be devoted to the service of my country, to the freedom of man. If blood is necessary to extinguish any fire which I have assisted to kindle, I can assure gentlemen, while I regret the necessity, I shall not forbear to contribute my mite." The portion of the amendment forbidding the introduction of slavery was then adopted by a vote of eighty-seven to seventy-six. The second portion of the amendment, by which chil-



dren born after the admission of the State should be made free at the age of twenty-five, was adopted by eighty-two to seventy-six, and the bill was then passed by ninety-seven to fifty-six.

The Senate, on the 27th of February, struck out of the bill that portion of Mr. Tallmadge's amendment making children free, born after the admission of the State, by thirty-one to seven; and the portion excluding slavery, by twenty-two to sixteen.

The House, by a majority of two, refused to concur with the Senate in striking out the prohibition. The Senate, however, adhering to its amendment, Mr. Taylor moved that the House adhere to its disagreement, and sustained his motion by a vigorous speech, in which he was strongly supported by Mr. Tallmadge, and Mr. Mills of Massachusetts. The House adhered by twelve majority, and the bill was lost.

In the following December Mr. Robertson of Kentucky moved that the House appoint a committee to consider the expediency of establishing a Territorial government over so much of the Missouri Territory as lay south of the parallel of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ . The committee, being appointed, reported a bill providing a Territorial government for the southern part of the Missouri Territory, to be called the Territory of Arkansas. When it came up for consideration, Mr. Taylor moved the prohibition of slavery in the proposed Territory. This amendment gave rise to a heated debate. Mr. Clay expressed his deep regret at its introduction, and charged its supporters with being under the influence of negrophobia. Mr. Nelson of Virginia charged its friends with fighting behind a masked battery. It was, he thought, an entering wedge to prepare the way for an attack by Congress on the property of masters in their slaves in the several States.

An earnest appeal was made by Mr. Taylor for the inhibition of slavery. Mr. Walker of North Carolina declared if Southern men were prohibited from taking their slaves into the Territory, their "land would be an uncultivated waste, a fruitless soil"; but if its slaves were freely permitted to go beyond the Mississippi, then "your lands," he said, "will be sold, your soil will be cultivated, and your country will flour-



ish." Louis McLane of Delaware denied the power of Congress to prohibit slavery in the Territories, or to make such prohibition a condition of admitting a State into the Union. He even maintained the extreme position of denying the right of any State to emancipate slaves. He asked: "What would be said of the legislature of the State of Delaware or Maryland, if, by law, they were to declare all the slaves within their limits to be free? Could it be pretended for a moment that they would have any right to do so?"

So much of Mr. Taylor's amendment as prohibited the introduction of slavery was rejected by the close vote of seventy to seventy-one; but so much as provided that all children born slaves should be free at the age of twenty-five was agreed to by a majority of two. Mr. Williams of North Carolina moved a reconsideration; but his motion failed by the same majority. It was then moved by Mr. Robertson to recommit the bill to a select committee, with instructions to strike out the amendments; and this motion was carried by the casting vote of the Speaker. The committee to whom the bill was recommitted consisted of Robertson of Kentucky, Silsbee and Mills of Massachusetts, Burwell of Virginia, and Lowndes of South Carolina. Thus Mr. Clay, who had been in favor of excluding slavery from Kentucky, and who professed to believe "slavery to be a wrong, a grievous wrong, no contingency can make right," not only secured this recommitment by his casting vote, but constituted the committee hostile to the humane provisions of the amendment. This action reveals and illustrates the sacrifices of principle and of conscience which the aspiring public men of the nation have been compelled to make, in order to secure the favor and support of the exacting and dominating Power which so long and so completely dictated what the policy and who the rulers of the nation should be.

The committee reported in favor of striking out the amendment; but the House, by a majority of two, voted to sustain it. It was then moved by Mr. Taylor that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude should be introduced into the Territory. This amendment was supported by Mr. Pitkin of Connecticut,

and opposed by Mr. Whitman of Massachusetts, who had voted for the prohibition of slavery in Missouri. It was lost, however, by a vote of eighty-six to ninety. It was then proposed by Mr. Taylor to prohibit slavery in all the territory north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ ; but after an excited debate he withdrew his proposition, and the bill passed without any restriction. When it came up for consideration in the Senate, Mr. Roberts of Pennsylvania moved to prohibit slavery. His amendment was defeated by a majority of five, and Arkansas became a slaveholding Territory, and the South again triumphed.

The XVIth Congress met on the 6th of December, 1819. On motion of Mr. Scott, the memorials in favor of the admission of Missouri as a State were referred to a select committee, consisting of himself, Robertson of Kentucky, Terrill of Georgia, Strother of Virginia, and De Witt of New York, one member only being from the free States. On the 9th Mr. Scott reported a bill for its admission on an equal footing with the original States.

In the Senate the memorial of the Territorial legislature of Missouri was referred to the Judiciary Committee, of which Mr. Smith of South Carolina was chairman. This committee reported the House bill for the admission of Maine, with an amendment authorizing the people of Missouri to form a State constitution. The bill coming up for consideration, Mr. Roberts of Pennsylvania moved to recommit it, with instructions to leave out the amendment. This motion was supported by Mellen and Otis of Massachusetts, Burrill of Rhode Island, Dana of Connecticut, and opposed by Smith of South Carolina and Lloyd of Maryland, but was lost by a majority of seven.

The consideration of the bill was resumed in the Senate, and Mr. Roberts moved to amend it by the provision that the introduction of slavery should be absolutely and irrevocably prohibited, supporting his amendment in a very able and forcible speech. Mr. Elliot of Georgia, however, declared the contemplated restriction to be "unauthorized by the Constitution, in contravention of a solemn treaty; and opposed by the suggestions of sound policy." Mr. Lowrie of Pennsylvania

said, if the alternative, as intimated by the opponents of slavery restriction, were a dissolution of the Union or the extension of slavery over the whole Western territory, "I will choose the former, though the choice is one that fills my mind with horror." The proposition was advocated by Morrill of New Hampshire, Mellen of Massachusetts, and Burrill of Rhode Island; and opposed by Walker of Georgia, Macon of North Carolina, and Pinkney of Maryland.

Mr. Otis of Massachusetts, though he had voted for the admission of Missouri at the previous session, now made a most earnest and eloquent speech in favor of prohibition, closing with the declaration that he was "unable to agree to any measure which should counteract the spirit of the age by increasing the mischief of slavery to a degree boundless in extent and perpetual in duration, and to entail on posterity a scourge for which we reproach the memory of our ancestors." Mr. Ruggles of Ohio declared, in the same strain, that "this day's legislation is not to perish with us,—it is to endure for centuries. The people of Missouri fifty years hence will trace, not to a British king, not to a corrupt British Parliament, but to Congress, the evils of slavery."

On the other hand, with equal if not greater positiveness and feeling, Southern members opposed the amendment. Mr. Smith of South Carolina characterized the efforts against the extension of slavery as "the misguided influences of fanaticism and humanity." Mr. Van Dyke of Delaware, though his State had adopted resolutions in favor of the restriction, now made a constitutional argument against the amendment. Mr. James Barbour of Virginia, afterward Secretary of War, and Minister to England under the administration of John Quincy Adams, spoke at great length against the restriction. Though, like most of the Virginia statesmen of that day, admitting that slavery was mixed with good and evil,—the latter greatly predominating,—he charged that the advocates of restriction were violating the Constitution, trampling underfoot the plighted faith of the nation, inflicting an immeasurable act of injustice on one half of the country, and laying the foundation of an incurable hatred. Richard M. Johnson of



Kentucky, afterward Vice-President of the United States, declared that "the friends of prohibition would check the progress of humanity, tighten the bands of the captive, prolong the time of slavery, and augment its evils, excite every discordant passion of the soul, and produce jargon, animosity, and strife." The vote was then taken on Mr. Roberts's amendment prohibiting slavery in Missouri, and it was defeated by nine majority.

During the debate Rufus King, who had again entered the Senate from New York, made two elaborate and powerful speeches in favor of the inhibition of slavery in the new States. They were regarded as the fullest, most thorough, and exhaustive presentations made in that debate. John Quincy Adams, who heard them, said that he unravelled with ingenious and subtle analysis many sophistical tissues of the slaveholders, and laid down the position of the natural liberty of man, and its incompatibility with slavery; and that the great slaveholders gnawed their lips and clenched their fists as they heard him. William Pinkney, the distinguished Maryland lawyer and orator, — who had declared, thirty years before, that "if slavery continues fifty years longer its effects will be seen in the decline of the spirit of liberty in the free States," — addressed the Senate for three hours, in a speech of great eloquence and power, against its prohibition in Missouri.

The Senate having by a majority of two voted to join Maine and Missouri in the same bill, Mr. Thomas of Illinois moved an amendment providing that in all the country ceded by France to the United States north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  there should be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude. Mr. Trimble moved to amend the amendment by excluding slavery from all the territory west of the Mississippi River, excepting Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri; but it was rejected. Mr. Thomas's amendment was adopted by a decided majority, and the bill was passed by a vote of twenty-four to twenty.

The bill was taken up in the House on the 26th of January, and Mr. Storrs moved to amend it so as to prohibit slavery north of the parallel of  $38^{\circ}$  west of the Mississippi. Mr. Taylor, moving, as an amendment, that there should be neither

slavery nor involuntary servitude in the State, made an elaborate argument in its support. He was immediately followed by Mr. Holmes, who, though a representative from Massachusetts, was found willing to lead off in the opposition. He declared, if he was reduced to the alternative of holding slaves in Missouri or violating the Constitution of his country, he would not permit "a doubt to cloud his choice." Thus was opened that remarkable debate in the popular branch of Congress which, estimated by the test of substantial ability or of wide-spread and far-reaching results, finds few equals in the legislative history of the nation.

Freedom found worthy representatives and advocates. Pennsylvania, true to her then proud and traditional pre-eminence, spoke manly words through the distinguished representative and lawyer of Philadelphia, John Sergeant, who said that he was not afraid of what is called popular excitement. Believing that all history teaches that revolutions are not the work of men, but of time and circumstances, he said: "Nothing can present a more frightful indication than public indifference to such a question as this. It is not by rigorously maintaining great moral and political principles in their purity that we incur danger." "Let the standard of freedom," he said, "be planted in Missouri by the hands of the Constitution, and let its banner wave over the heads of none but freemen, — men retaining the image impressed upon them by their Creator, and dependent upon none but God and the laws. Then, as our republican States extend, republican principles will go hand in hand with republican practice, the love of liberty with the sense of justice."

Mr. Hemphill, also of Pennsylvania, made a learned and exhaustive argument in favor of Mr. Taylor's amendment. Mr. Cook of Illinois believed the measure had originated in the best and noblest motives, — motives dictated by humanity and the well-being of the nation. Though opposing the popular feeling of Missouri, he said: "I believe, if the voice of futurity could be heard, I should receive her approbation and her gratitude. She might come from the wilderness, with her locks wet with the dews of the night, and knock at your door for

admittance till she falls with *weakness*; and, unless she comes in the white robes of freedom and a pledge against the future evils of slavery, with my consent she will not be admitted."

On the other hand, Slavery put forth her strong men to plead her cause and dragoon the government into submission to her haughty behests. Of course Mr. Clay's clarion voice was heard loudest in the din of strife, summoning his countrymen, in the sacred name of patriotic devotion to the nation, to follow his lead, as he consecrated talents, position, and influence at the shrine of the exacting Power that claimed the cruel sacrifice. He spoke for four hours against the expediency and right of restriction. Mr. McLane of Delaware spoke in the same strain. Mr. Reid of Georgia declared that the welfare and security of the citizens forbade emancipation; though he would hail the day as the most glorious in its dawning which should behold, with safety to its white citizens, the black population placed on the high elevation of equal rights and clothed with the privileges of American citizens.

Mr. Hardin of Kentucky accused the advocates of prohibition of fighting under false colors. "It would be more magnanimous," he said, "to haul down the colors on which are engraven humanity, morality, and religion, and unfurl the genuine banner, on which is written a contest for political consequence and mastery." General Smythe of Virginia, whose speeches were more remarkable for length and dulness than for other qualities, declared that he would not apologize for the length of his speech on that occasion; for he had spoken "to preserve our citizens from massacre, our wives and daughters from violation, and our children from being impaled by the most inhuman of savages."

John Tyler, afterward President of the United States, always a pliant instrument of the Slave Power, and a rebel in the late rebellion, appealed to the Northern republicans to pause and remember that their triumph was to be over their firm and steadfast friends of the South. He maintained that slaves were guaranteed as property in the Constitution. Northern gentlemen, he said, should "not forget themselves. Rail at slavery as much as you please. I point you to the Constitu-



tion, and say to you that you have not only acknowledged our right to this species of property, but you have gone much further and have bound yourselves to rivet the chains of the slave." He told the friends of prohibition that they might return to their constituents and receive votes of thanks; but, instead of blessings, the deepest curses of posterity would be uttered against their destructive policy.

In the midst of the debate, which had run for nearly a month, the House bill for the admission of Maine was returned, with an amendment authorizing the people of Missouri to form a State government. Mr. Taylor moved that the House disagree, while Mr. Scott moved that it be referred to the committee of the whole, which had under consideration the Missouri bill. After a brief debate, Mr. Scott's amendment was rejected by a decisive majority. The House resuming the consideration of the Maine and Missouri bill, John Randolph made a long speech against the Senate's amendment excluding slavery north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ . The next day the House disagreed to the Senate's amendment uniting the bills for the admission of Maine and Missouri, while so much of the amendment as prohibited slavery from territory north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  was disagreed to, and the debate was resumed.

Mr. Plummer of New Hampshire, in reply to Mr. Clay, who had warned the men of New England not to intrude upon him their New England notions, declared that those notions were liberty, equality, and the rights of man. "These are the notions," he said, "which we must cast aside when we leave our happy homes, and which, if by chance they find their way into this hall, are to be repelled with the charge of fanaticism, folly, and negrophobia. Sir, if there be any madness in this case, it is the madness of those who hug slavery to their bosoms. If there be any infatuation, it is the infatuation of those who are willing to dissolve the Union rather than not extend this pestiferous institution beyond the Mississippi." Mr. Fuller of Massachusetts said, if Missouri would be strong in war, let her invite only freemen, who will defend their families and their freedom; "not slaves, who can seek their own happiness only by withering the arm that holds them in bondage."

On the 28th of February it was announced to the House that the Senate insisted on its amendment; when, on motion of Mr. Taylor, it was voted to adhere to its disagreement by a majority of twenty-one. Proceeding to the consideration of the bill, the House rejected Mr. Storrs's amendment excluding slavery from territory north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ . Mr. Allen of Massachusetts moved to amend the bill by striking out the word "white," so as to extend the privilege of voting to all male citizens, supporting his amendment by a speech of some length. His amendment, however, received only his own vote. Both Mr. Clay and Mr. Storrs sought such a modification of Mr. Taylor's amendment, already adopted, as to make it a mere recommendation. Though they supported their proposition with great earnestness, it failed of receiving the sanction of the House. On the next day Mr. Storrs moved his amendment, providing that Mr. Taylor's amendment should be offered for the free acceptance or rejection of Missouri; but it was rejected. Mr. Taylor's amendment was then agreed to by eight majority; the bill was ordered to a third reading, and on the 1st of March it was passed by a vote of ninety-one to eighty-two.

On the same day the House agreed to a conference, asked for by the Senate, on the bill for the admission of the State of Maine. The Senate appointed on the Committee of Conference Thomas of Illinois, Pinkney of Maryland, and Barbour of Virginia. The House added Holmes and Parker of Massachusetts, Taylor of New York, Lowndes of South Carolina, and Kinsey of New Jersey.

The next day the Missouri bill was taken up in the Senate, and, on motion of Mr. Barbour, so much of the bill as prohibited slavery was stricken out by twenty-seven to fifteen. Mr. Thomas moved to amend the bill by adding a section excluding slavery north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ . Mr. Trimble moved to amend that amendment by prohibiting slavery in all territory ceded by France, excepting Louisiana, Missouri, and Arkansas. His motion, however, received only twelve votes, and the amendment of Mr. Thomas was adopted.

On the same day Mr. Holmes, from the committee of con-

ference, reported to the House that the Senate secede from its amendment to the bill for the admission of Maine ; and that the House strike out from the bill authorizing the people of Missouri to form a constitution the prohibition of slavery, and insert the inhibition of slavery in all the territories ceded by France north of the parallel of  $36^{\circ} 30'$ . The report was laid upon the table, and the House proceeded to the consideration of the Senate's amendments to the Missouri bill. The question was so divided as to be first taken on striking out the prohibition of slavery in that State. Mr. Lowndes spoke briefly in support of the compromise recommended by the committee of conference. He declared that its adoption would restore tranquillity to the country, — a result demanded by every consideration of discretion, of moderation, of wisdom, and of virtue. Mr. Holmes of Massachusetts spoke for the compromise, and Mr. Adams of the same State against it. Kinsey of New Jersey, Stevens of Connecticut, and Mercer of Virginia earnestly advocated the compromise. On the question of striking out the restriction the vote stood yeas ninety, nays eighty-seven ; not a single member from the slave States voting for prohibition, and fourteen members from the free States voting against it. Though the legislatures of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania had adopted resolutions in favor of such prohibition, seven members from those States recorded their votes against the sentiments embodied in them. New England, too, furnished seven representatives who thus proved themselves false to the claims of humanity, the rights of man, and the permanent interests of the country. The motion to concur with the Senate in inserting in the bill the clause inhibiting slavery in the territory acquired from France north of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  was then agreed to by a vote of one hundred and thirty-four to forty-two.

Throughout the long struggle the President and his cabinet had manifested the deepest interest. On the passage of the bill he submitted to them the question : "Has Congress the constitutional power to prohibit slavery in a Territory ?" To this question an affirmative answer was given, though all but Mr. Adams were of the opinion that the word "forever"



in the prohibitory clause did not interfere with the right of any State that might be organized from that territory to prohibit or establish slavery. Having received from all the members of his cabinet the opinion that the proviso forever prohibiting slavery north of the parallel of  $36^{\circ} 30'$  was constitutional, President Monroe affixed his signature to the bill.

The victory of the Slave Power was now complete; slavery was fastened upon the Territory of Arkansas and the new State of Missouri; and the dark cloud, surcharged with its numberless wrongs and woes, rolled heavily across the Mississippi. Under the skilful lead of her distinguished sons and champions, in both the legislative and executive departments of government, the slaveholding South imposed upon the country, thus basely betrayed and subdued, another compromise, — a compromise, however, to be kept only so long as the interests of the vile and false system which exacted it could be promoted by it; then to be ruthlessly broken and treated as a thing of naught.

This Missouri struggle, which so aroused and called into action the vital forces of freedom and slavery, demonstrated the startling fact that the race of Southern statesmen who believed slavery to be a temporary evil, to be abolished at some future time and in some yet unforeseen way, had passed away. It revealed a new class, who had learned either to believe that it was "a positive good," or so to "conquer their prejudices" as to subordinate their convictions to the assumed necessities of the system and the intolerant demands of that rapidly increasing power. President Monroe, who believed that slavery "preyed on the vitals" of the State which tolerated it, opposed the Missouri restriction. Several of his Cabinet actively labored to defeat it. Even John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, favored the Missouri Compromise, "believing it to be," he said, "all that could be effected under the present Constitution, and from extreme unwillingness to put the Union in hazard." He stated that "the impression produced on his mind by the progress of the discussion was, that the bargain between freedom and slavery contained in the Constitution of the United States was morally and politically inconsistent with the principles on

which alone our Revolution could be justified ; cruel and oppressive by riveting the chains of slavery, by pledging the faith of freedom to maintain and perpetuate the tyranny of the master ; and grossly unequal and impolitic by admitting that slaves are at once enemies to be kept in subjection, property to be secured and returned to its owners, and persons not to be represented themselves, but for whom their masters are privileged with nearly a double share of representation. The consequence has been that this slave representation has governed the Union. Benjamin's portion above his brethren has ravened as a wolf. In the morning he has devoured the prey, and in the evening has divided the spoil."

Mr. Jefferson, who was the father of the party then in power, wielding a potential influence in its councils, though he had once prepared a plan for the prohibition of slavery which was designed to secure to freedom all the territory from the Lakes to the Gulf, became alarmed and shrunk appalled before the fury of the strife, declaring that it fell upon his ear "like the fire-bell at midnight." He, too, yielded to the pressure, and condemned the men who were battling for the very principles he had himself so grandly enunciated and ably defended. Mr. Madison, also, the calm and judicious statesman who would not allow the word "slave" to desecrate the Constitution, trembled for the fate of the Union, menaced by the madness of the slave-masters, and threw the weight of his great name in favor of a policy which would subject Missouri to the same influences which had so sadly blighted and despoiled his once proud commonwealth.

Never before had the antislavery sentiment of the North been so quickened and aroused. Popular meetings were holden, in which Federalists and Democrats enthusiastically and cordially united. Public addresses were made, and petitions and memorials were sent to Congress. The citizens of Boston assembled and voted to memorialize Congress to restrain the increase of slavery in new States to be admitted into the Union. This memorial, drawn up by Daniel Webster, set forth that "the happiness of unborn millions was at issue"; that the admission of slavery into a new country encouraged

“rapacity, fraud, and violence,” tarnished “the proud fame of the country,” and rendered questionable all “professions of regard for the rights of humanity or the liberties of mankind.” This calm and dignified paper, in which the issues were put with great discrimination and emphasis, closed with this manly and earnest appeal: “As inhabitants of a free country, as citizens of a great and rising republic, as members of a Christian community, as living in a liberal and enlightened age, and as feeling ourselves called upon by the dictates of religion and humanity, we have presumed to offer our sentiments to Congress on this question with a solicitude for the event far beyond what a common occasion could inspire.”

These sentiments, so strongly and eloquently expressed, were entertained with singular unanimity, not alone by the people of Massachusetts, but by the people of New England and of the entire North. The legislatures of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio, and Indiana passed resolutions affirming the power and duty of Congress to prohibit slavery in the States to be carved out of Western territory. These resolutions, adopted with little opposition, were based upon the indestructible principles of humanity, justice, and liberty. The legislature of Pennsylvania, without a dissenting vote, supported the humane and enlightened policy of prohibiting slavery in Missouri. Their resolutions proclaimed with emphasis that “they are persuaded that to open the fertile regions of the West to a servile race would tend to increase their numbers beyond all past example, would open a new and steady market for the lawless venders of human flesh, and render all schemes for obliterating this foul blot upon the American character useless and unavailing.” They denounced the attempt to bring Missouri into the Union as a slaveholding State as a measure “to spread the crimes and cruelties of slavery from the banks of the Mississippi to the shores of the Pacific.” And they invoked the several States, “by the duty they owe to the Deity, by the veneration which they entertain for the memories of the founders of the Republic, and by a tender regard for posterity, to protest



against its adoption, to refuse to covenant with crime, and to limit the range of an evil that already hangs in awful boding over so large a portion of the Union."

Nor was the South less united and determined. Its leaders were, indeed, more persistent and adroit. Compact in organization, united in purpose and plan, in full possession of the government, and, as might be expected in support of such a crime against nature and religion, not over-scrupulous, they found means to alarm and persuade, if not to corrupt, Northern men to betray their section, blight the hopes of their people, and sacrifice the permanent interests of the whole country.

Mortified at their betrayal, aggrieved at their defeat, and apprehensive in view of these demonstrations of slaveholding power, the more thoughtful Northern men began to comprehend more clearly the radical incompatibility between slave and free institutions. Governor Wolcott of Connecticut, in his address to the legislature of that State, thus expressed the growing conviction: "It cannot have escaped your attention that a diversity of habits and principles of government exist in this country; and I think it is evident that slavery is gradually forming those distinctions which, according to invariable laws of human action, constitute the characteristic difference between aristocratical and democratical institutions." These differences, wrought by slavery, in the ideas, social life, and institutions of the North and South, so distinctly revealed in the Missouri struggle, continued, in their development, to become more and more antagonistic and divergent, until, after the conflicts of forty years, the two systems grappled in the bloody struggle of civil war.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ADMISSION OF MISSOURI. — ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE SLAVERY INTO ILLINOIS.

Constitution of Missouri. — Resolution of Admission in the Senate. — Mr. Eaton's Proviso. — Mr. Wilson's Proviso. — Debate. — Passage of the Resolution of Admission. — Report by Mr. Lowndes in the House. — Remarks by Sergeant, Storrs, Lowndes, Cook. — House Resolution rejected. — Senate Resolution referred to a Committee of Thirteen. — Report of Committee rejected. — Speech of Mr. Pinckney. — Mr. Brown's Proposition. — Appointment of Joint Special Committee. — Mr. Clay's Compromise adopted. — Conditions accepted by Missouri. — Slaves in Illinois. — Slave Codes. — Governor Coles. — Defeat of the Plot to make Illinois a Slave State.

THIS action of Congress having left Missouri free to establish, guard, and perpetuate the slave system, the convention for framing the constitution not only established slavery, but provided in that instrument that it should be the duty of the general assembly, as soon as might be, to pass such laws as were necessary to prevent free negroes or mulattoes on any pretext whatever from coming into or settling in the State. Elated by their great triumph its framers proposed the violation, not only of the common principles of humanity, but of the rights of citizenship, as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States.

The second session of the XVI. Congress convened on the 13th of November, 1820. The next day the President sent to the Senate a copy of the constitution of Missouri. It was referred to a select committee, of which Mr. Smith of South Carolina was chairman. On the 29th the committee reported a resolution for the admission of Missouri. The chairman stated that the constitution was republican in form, and he trusted it would at once be acted upon, and the members of the new State promptly admitted to the national coun-

cils. Mr. Eaton of Tennessee moved that its consideration be postponed, in order that he might examine it, to see if it were conformable in all respects with the Constitution of the United States. He suggested that "there were controverted points in it." Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky did not object to the postponement. "The question," he said, "swallows up, in fact, every other ; and, until it is settled, we cannot go on with the ordinary business of the session." It was remarked by Mr. Barbour of Virginia that he had supposed the question had been decided at the last session. So fully persuaded was he of the fact that he had supposed that "accursed would be the hand that would again open this fountain of bitter waters." The motion prevailed, and the question came up again on the 6th of December. Although Mr. Barbour suggested that the mind of every senator was fully made up, and the question could be decided without debate, "the controverted points" in the constitution were at once revealed.

Mr. Eaton moved to add a proviso that "nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to give the assent of Congress to any provision of the constitution of Missouri, if any such there be, that contravenes the clause in the Constitution of the United States which declares that 'the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens of the several States.'" A proviso was then moved by Mr. Wilson of New Jersey, referring specifically to the objectionable clause in the constitution of Missouri ; but it received the votes of only nine members. Mr. Eaton's proviso was then lost.

Mr. Burrill of Rhode Island, a dissenting member of the committee, then addressed the Senate. He was a ripe scholar and an eminent lawyer, by whose early death his State and the nation sustained a serious loss. Speaking with clearness and precision, he maintained that the act admitting Missouri was in the nature of a contract between the United States and the people of Missouri ; and it was competent for Congress, and it was its duty, to see if that contract had been faithfully fulfilled. Referring to the obnoxious clause, he said he con-



ceived it to be "entirely repugnant to the Constitution of the United States. In Massachusetts there is no distinction of color, and all possess precisely the same rights. Can it be possible for Missouri, consistently with the Constitution, to exclude any of those citizens of Massachusetts from the State? The States of this Union are not independent nations. When they framed the Constitution they used the language 'We, the people.' Sanction this improper clause now, and you sanction it for all time to come; and, however we may desire hereafter to avoid it, it will be irrevocably fixed."

Mr. Smith, chairman of the committee, followed in an elaborate speech of great length. "The history of the ancient world," he said, "affords no precedent. As no example is found in the history of any other nation, and this being the first time when this question has occurred in our own government, whether free negroes and mulattoes are citizens, we must ascertain their *status* from the Constitution of the United States and the State constitutions. They furnish a mass of evidence, which none but a sceptic can doubt, that they have been considered a part of the body politic neither by the general government nor the State governments." Of the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence, he significantly asked: "If this were a declaration of independence for the blacks as well as the whites, why did you not all emancipate your slaves at once and let them join you in the war?" Referring to the naturalization laws, he maintained that they were for white persons only. He showed that in several of the free States white inhabitants only were allowed political privileges. By a full and mortifying recital of national as well as State legislation, he was able to show how strangely and cruelly the nation had discriminated for the whites and against the blacks. He closed by presenting a tabular statement, procured from the custom-house in Charleston, South Carolina, of the names of all the vessels, and their owners, which had entered that port during the four years ending in 1807. From that statement it appeared that citizens of Rhode Island had imported eight thousand slaves,—one fifth of all which had been brought into the country; "thus showing," he said, "that those people

who most deprecate the evils of slavery and the traffic in human flesh can sell human flesh with an easy conscience when a profitable market can be found."

John Holmes of Maine, who had, as representative from Massachusetts, at the preceding session, labored so efficiently to defeat prohibition in Missouri and to compromise the rights of freemen, now made a specious argument, in which he maintained that Missouri had not impaired her claim for admission by prohibiting the entrance of free negroes and mulattoes. Asserting that States might enact laws against paupers and vagabonds, he alleged that it was safe to assume that manumitted slaves would become such. He also maintained that free negroes and mulattoes were not citizens within the meaning and intent of the Constitution, and contended that no one could be a citizen unless he had an agency in the formation and administration of the laws; that free negroes and mulattoes had not that agency, and therefore were not citizens; and hence their exclusion by Missouri was not an infraction of the Constitution.

Mr. Otis of Massachusetts replied in a speech of great elegance and force. To Mr. Holmes's definition of citizenship and argument thereon he replied that if an unjust State government might "create odious and other distinctions between its privileged and other classes," that certainly could not divest them of "the right of protection in life, liberty, and property, of residence, and inheritable blood." The resolution, after further debate, was passed by eight majority.

In the House of Representatives Mr. Scott, early in the session, presented the constitution of Missouri, which was referred to a select committee, of which Mr. Lowndes of South Carolina was chairman. A report was promptly made in favor of its admission as a State. It was the subject of continuous debate for several days. Mr. Sergeant of Pennsylvania made a very able speech in opposition to its adoption. Referring to the clause of the Constitution giving to the citizens of one State the privileges and immunities of citizens in other States, he declared his inability to see how that could be constitutional which forbade a citizen of Massachusetts "to set his foot in

the State of Missouri." The simple privilege of locomotion is all that is asked for now ; and surely that must be one of the privileges and immunities of citizenship. This learned lawyer and able and upright statesman said unequivocally that this clause of the constitution of Missouri respecting free people of color was " a plain and palpable infraction of the Constitution of the United States " ; that " the plain course, then, was not to receive the constitution " ; and that it was " the duty of this House to *reject* it."

Mr. Storrs of New York, who had steadily voted, at the previous session, against the restriction of slavery in Missouri, avowed it to be his intention to vote against the admission of that State, because her constitution was repugnant to the Constitution of the United States. He made a learned and able speech, in which he maintained that the clause in the Constitution which secured to the citizens of each State the privileges and immunities of the citizens of the several States is " laid deep in the structure of the government," " is capable of no construction which does not plainly denote the universality of its operation and its uniform application to individual right throughout every portion of the nation." The same sentiments were maintained by Mr. Hemphill of Pennsylvania and Mr. Mallory of Vermont.

These views were combated by Lowndes, by Philip P. Barbour and Archer of Virginia, and by McLane of Delaware, in elaborate but specious arguments. Mr. Barbour considered free persons of color as a nondescript class. In some States they have some civil rights, in others none ; in some States they have some political rights, in others none. Mr. Lowndes said : " No federal privileges had been conferred upon that degraded caste of our population, rejected as they were in every State from social and political privileges, either by the protection of law or the feelings of society."

Mr. Cook of Illinois made the point, that Congress, in consideration of military services, had granted land bounties for lands in Missouri, some of which had been received by free people of color. They had thus acquired a fee simple of the soil. These rights even the United States could not take away



or infringe; and yet Missouri, a subordinate power, proposed virtually to do that very thing. This encroachment he pronounced "both unjustifiable and unconstitutional."

The debate was brought to a close on the 13th of December, and the resolution of admission was rejected by a majority of fourteen. This result produced much excitement. Mr. Lowndes immediately arose and said, with deep feeling: "I do not wish to be disrespectful to a majority of the House; but I feel it my duty to call on them, having rejected the resolution proposed by a committee of their appointment, to devise and propose the means necessary to protect the Territory." The deep emotion exhibited by Mr. Lowndes, one of the ablest and certainly one of the most courteous and moderate of Southern statesmen, was fully shared by the representatives and people of the slaveholding States, who, with like feelings, were less choice and courteous in their modes of expression.

In the latter part of January Mr. Eustis of Massachusetts proposed that Missouri should be admitted on condition that she should expunge from her constitution the clause discriminating against free people of color. After various motions the proposition was rejected by a vote approaching unanimity. Mr. Clay, who had been absent during the first weeks of the session, then immediately arose and gave notice that he should move to take up the Senate resolution. On the 29th he made the promised motion, and supported it in an earnest and powerful argument, in which he denied that there was any repugnance between the clauses so often referred to in the constitutions of the United States and of Missouri.

An amendment was then offered by Mr. Foote of Connecticut, providing that Missouri should be admitted on condition that she should expunge the objectionable clause. This amendment, after various motions and modifications, was rejected by a decided majority. Other amendments were offered, and the debate ranged over the general subjects of the evils of slavery, the rights of the South, the balance of power, and the obligations and value of the Union. When the several amendments which had been offered and debated were rejected, Mr. Clay moved that the Senate resolution should be referred to a select

committee of thirteen. This motion was agreed to ; the committee was appointed, and he was made its chairman.

The committee made an early report. Referring to the conflicting views entertained by members, this report declared that the committee thought it best that, without either side abandoning its opinion, an endeavor should be made to frame an amendment to the Senate resolution, which, without compromising either, should guard and guarantee the rights of both. The gist of the resolution was contained in a fundamental condition and two provisos. It declared that "the said State shall never pass any law preventing any description of persons from going to and settling in the said State who now are or may become citizens of any State of the Union ; provided that the State, by solemn public act, shall declare its assent to this fundamental condition, and provided that this act shall not be so construed as to take from Missouri any right or power exercised by any of the original States." After exciting debates and various proposed amendments, the resolution was brought to a vote, and rejected by eighty yeas to eighty-three nays. This vote was strangely significant of the state of public sentiment, and the almost even balance of parties in that excited contest. Thus the report of the select committee was at first rejected in the committee of the whole, then accepted by the House, then rejected on the third reading, reconsidered, and then finally defeated by six majority.

During this close and desperate struggle several earnest and powerful speeches were made. Among them was one by Charles Pinckney. Referring to the fact that he was a member of the convention that framed the Constitution of the United States, he avowed that "the article on which so much stress is laid, and on the meaning of which the whole of the question is made to turn, and which is in these words, 'The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities in every State,' having been made by me, it is supposed I must know or perfectly recollect what I meant by it. In answer, I say that at the time I drew the clause of the Constitution I knew that there did not then exist such a thing in the Union as a black or colored citizen ; nor could I then

have conceived it possible such a thing could ever have existed in it ; nor do I now believe one does exist in it." In defence of this explicit statement, he proceeded to define what constituted a citizen in his own State, in which the black man was certainly not so regarded. He then charged upon the North, upon the New England States even, that the black man was not so regarded after the abolition of slavery there. Referring to the cruel laws and practices of the free States, he maintained that, so far from treating free colored persons as citizens, the people of those States deemed any admixture of blood or any connection with them to be a disgrace.

This second defeat of the proposition for the admission of Missouri deepened and intensified the sectional feeling in Congress and in the country. Mr. Brown of Kentucky sought by resolution to repeal the slavery restriction embodied in the Missouri Compromise of the preceding session. He made an elaborate speech in support of his proposition ; but it was defeated by a decisive vote.

On the 22d of February Mr. Clay made another effort to secure the admission of Missouri by moving for the appointment of a joint special committee of the two Houses to consider the subject and report what action can be taken or agreed upon concerning it. After an hour's debate the motion was agreed to, and a committee of twenty-three on the part of the House was chosen by ballot. The Senate concurred in the vote by a large majority, and chose seven men, at the head of whom was John Holmes of Maine. The joint committee reported a resolution, which its chairman, Mr. Clay, considered as being the same in effect as that reported by the committee of thirteen. It was very briefly considered, the previous question was moved, and the bill passed by a majority of six. The resolution was sent to the Senate, and passed by the decided vote of twenty-eight to fourteen. Thus the determined purpose, persistency, and tact of the Slave Power, sustained by the active influences of the President and his cabinet, again triumphed.

The legislature of Missouri promptly complied with the conditions of the compromise, which required "that the



fourth clause of the twenty-sixth section of the third article of the constitution submitted on the part of said State to Congress shall never be construed to authorize the passage of any law, and that no law shall be passed in conformity thereto, by which any citizen of either of the States in this Union shall be excluded from the enjoyment of any of the privileges and immunities to which such citizen is entitled under the Constitution of the United States."

Thus was closed the Missouri controversy, which had lasted more than two years, and which had stirred the country to its profoundest depths. The debates were earnest, able, and often eloquent. Seldom has any question drawn out a debate in Congress so elaborate and exhaustive. Not only were the conflicting principles of freedom and slavery at issue, and the interests of the two sections at stake ; but the passions, prejudices, and pride of both sides were thoroughly aroused. The personal and pecuniary interests of the Southern members and those they represented were immediately and seriously involved. The South was a unit. Her representatives were therefore impelled to put forth the most strenuous efforts. In that great struggle it was admitted that slavery, rather than freedom, commanded the services not only of the most earnest but of the most eloquent debaters of both Houses, and of statesmen of the largest experience and most commanding influence in the country.

During this Missouri struggle a conspiracy was formed to make Illinois a slave State. Both of her Senators were natives of the South, and they had pertinaciously opposed the prohibition of slavery in Missouri, while her Representative was its earnest and eloquent advocate. A majority of its settlers at that time unquestionably approved of the action of their Senators.

Illinois had been largely settled by emigrants from the South, who carried with them their love of slavery and their unreasoning prejudices against free negroes. In 1807 the Territorial legislature of Indiana made it lawful for any owner or possessor of any negroes or mulattoes above fifteen years

of age to bring them into that Territory, which then included the present State of Illinois. Within thirty days he was required to take such negro before the clerk of the county court and enter into an agreement with the latter by which he was to serve him a given number of years. If the negro refused to enter into such an agreement, he was to be taken back within sixty days to the place from which he came. This act provided, further, that any owner or possessor of negroes under fifteen years of age was authorized to hold the males till they were thirty-five, and the females until they were thirty-two years of age, "to service and labor." It also provided that the children born of these registered servants should be held to like service, the males till they were thirty years and the females till they were twenty-eight years of age. When Illinois became a Territory it reaffirmed these laws. By their inhuman provisions Southern masters could take their slaves into this Territory, and compel them to enter into contracts to serve them a number of years, exceeding their natural lives, or be sent back to perpetual servitude. Their children under fifteen years of age and those born after entering the Territory were also doomed to the same service for a period of years. This was practically involuntary servitude, and in direct violation of the ordinance of 1787. Such was the public sentiment, and so great were the difficulties in the way of asserting their rights, that many negroes were held in a bondage as severe as any that prevailed in the Southern States.

By the constitution of Illinois, adopted in 1818, suffrage was limited to free white persons; the introduction of slavery was forbidden, and it was provided that no contracts should be made for a longer period than one year. It provided, however, that all preceding contracts should be valid; but it required that the children of such registered servants should become free at the lawful age. On the admission of the State the legislature had hastened to enact a code of black laws, most of which were taken from the slave codes of Virginia and Kentucky, from which States most of the settlers had emigrated. Fines were imposed upon persons bringing negroes into the

State; and negroes found without certificates of freedom were doomed to be sold into slavery for one year. Free negroes were compelled to give sureties, and when convicted of any petty offences, they were to be punished with stripes. These degrading laws were often cruelly enforced, and for more than forty years they continued to disgrace the statute-book of that rising State.

After the admission of Missouri, emigrants from Virginia and Kentucky, with their long trains of teams and negroes, passed through portions of the State on their way to Missouri. Many of them were men of wealth and education, and as they passed along with their droves of negroes, they did not fail to remind the settlers and land speculators that they had been excluded from purchasing their lands and settling among them by the prohibition of slavery. Of course these land-owners envied the good fortune of Missouri. Feeling that the prospects of Illinois had been blasted by freedom, they nursed the desire to make it a slave State. This purpose was carried into the election of 1822. The legislature was carried by the friends of slavery, though, on account of dividing their votes between two candidates, they failed to carry either of their candidates for governor, and Edward Coles was elected to the gubernatorial chair by the friends of freedom. Mr. Coles was a native of Virginia, a gentleman of culture and character, had emancipated his slaves, moved with them to Illinois in 1818, and settled them upon lands which he had given them. He had been private secretary of Mr. Madison, was the personal friend of Mr. Jefferson, and an uncompromising emancipationist.

There were in Illinois a few French settlers holding slaves, to whom, by common consent, neither the constitution of the State nor the principle of the ordinance of 1787 had been applied. When the legislature met, Governor Coles recommended the emancipation of these slaves. This recommendation incensed the advocates of slavery, and they sought to amend the constitution. To call a convention for that purpose required a two-thirds vote of both branches of the legislature, ratified by a vote of the people. They had the requisite vote in the Senate, but lacked one vote in the House. They had two purposes, — to carry the convention, and to elect a proslavery



candidate for the United States Senate. There were two contestants for one of the counties, — one of them would vote for their candidate for the Senate, but would not vote for the convention ; the other would vote for the convention, but not for the candidate. They admitted the contesting member that was willing to vote for their candidate for the Senate, and after using his vote for that purpose expelled him from the House and admitted the other. By this audacious trick and reckless profligacy of principle the advocates of slavery, true to its instincts of fraud and violence, carried their point, and the call for the convention was submitted to the people. Having accomplished this purpose, with low-bred and indecent effrontery they formed a disorderly procession, under the lead of the lieutenant-governor, several judges and a majority of the legislature, of the rowdy elements of the capital, and “ with blowing of horns and beating of drums and tin pans,” they marched to the residence of the governor and to those of the other members in sympathy with him, to insult, by their riotous demonstrations, those opposed to making Illinois a slave State. But Governor Coles and his friends were not to be intimidated. They were rather strengthened than shaken in their purpose to exclude from Illinois a system that inspired such displays of its ferocious and brutalizing influence upon every one enlisted in its advocacy and support. They appealed to the people not to ratify the action of the legislature. Papers were established, and Governor Coles, David Blackwell, Thomas Lippincott, George Churchill, Morris Birkbeck, Judge Lockwood, and other leading men made public addresses and prepared articles for the press and pamphlets for circulation against the suicidal policy of giving that great commonwealth to slavery. The Methodist and Baptist clergy, many of whom had been Southern men who had seen and experienced the evils of the system, labored zealously and effectively for the same good purpose. After an excited and bitter contest, of more than fifteen months, the proposed convention was voted down by a majority of more than two thousand. The victory was complete and final. The friends of liberty throughout the country, dejected by the result of the Missouri struggle, found some compensation in the thought that Illinois had been saved to freedom.

## CHAPTER XIII.

EARLY ANTISLAVERY MOVEMENTS. — BENJAMIN LUNDY. — WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON.

Aggressive and Dominating Spirit of Slavery. — Elias Hicks. — Antislavery in Kentucky and Tennessee. — Benjamin Lundy. — He organizes an Antislavery Society in Ohio. — “Genius of Emancipation.” — Removed to Tennessee. — Established Abolition Societies in North Carolina. — Meeting of the American Abolition Convention. — Political Action recommended. — Establishes his Paper in Baltimore. — Visits the Eastern States. — Joined by Mr. Garrison. — Imprisonment of Mr. Garrison. — Paper removed to Washington. — Establishes the “National Inquirer.” — Removal to the West. — Death. — Character. — Mr. Garrison. — Joins Mr. Lundy. — Adopts the Doctrine of Immediate Emancipation. — Denunciation of the Slave-trade. — Imprisoned in Baltimore. — Release through Intervention of Arthur Tappan. — Denounces the Colonization Society. — Establishes “The Liberator.” — Public Sentiment. — Rewards offered for his Arrest. — His Fearlessness, Inflexibility, and Persistency.

IN the Missouri struggle freedom and slavery grappled for the mastery. Freedom lost, and slavery won. Freedom became timid, hesitating, yielding; slavery became bolder, more aggressive, and more dominating. Freedom retreated from one lost position to another; slavery advanced from conquest to conquest. Several years of unresisted despotism of the Slave Power followed this consummation of the Missouri compromise. The dark spirit of slavery swayed the policy of the republic. Southern legislatures repealed the more humane acts of their slave codes, revived the more severe laws of colonial legislation, and enacted statutes still more inhuman. Northern States, too, were guilty of enacting similar statutory provisions in the interest of oppression. The conscience of the people was lulled into quiet by the new scheme of African colonization. Institutions of learning, benevolence, and religion, political organizations and public men bent in unresisting submission before this all-conquering despotism, whose

aggressive advances became more resistless, as its successive victories became more complete. But amid this general defection and complete surrender there were a few who kept the faith of the fathers, and firmly and bravely adhered to the doctrines of human rights. Even in that dark night there were Christian men who not only believed, but faithfully enunciated the creed of human fraternity, equality, and liberty; though their movements were individual and local, and their appeals were unheeded by the great body of the people. Indeed, there have always been witnesses for the truth; and it has been a sad aggravation of the national apostasy that it was effected in spite of the earnest protests of these faithful men.

Among these witnesses were the Quakers, especially the followers of Elias Hicks. As early as the year 1814 he published a work on African slavery. In it he maintained that the slaveholder had no moral right whatever to the man he styled his slave, or to the products of his labor. He also enunciated the incontrovertible principles that the slaveholder had no other than a criminal possession of the bondman; that he could convey no right to a second person; that the purchaser had no more right than the original possessor, whose right was founded on violence; and that each holder of a slave, no matter how many hands that slave may have passed through, is guilty of the crime of the first perpetrator. As with the leader, so with most of his followers,—their opposition to slavery was always earnest and unequivocal.

There was, also, a large infusion of antislavery feeling, especially among the churches of Kentucky and Tennessee, many of whose ministers proclaimed with great clearness and force the distinctive doctrines of modern abolition. It was, however, their misfortune and grief to dwell in communities where the proslavery spirit was becoming increasingly intolerant and controlling in its influence on the public mind, rendering their residence uncomfortable and unsafe. Accordingly, such men as Rev. John Rankin, a native of Tennessee, with their flocks, removed to the free States across the Ohio River, and there retained and insisted on the same sentiments for which they were ostracized in their former



homes. In New England the proportion of antislavery men was much smaller, though there were some. Among them was William Goodell, who in 1820 published in the *Providence Gazette* a series of papers on the Missouri struggle, in which he enunciated very clearly the primary principles of human rights. He was for more than forty years connected with an antislavery press.

But far the most devoted, effective, and prominent antislavery worker of those days was Benjamin Lundy. From 1815 to 1830 his labors were immense, involving great personal hardship and sacrifice, and placing him far in advance of all contemporaneous or earlier Abolitionists. He was a native of New Jersey, and of Quaker origin. At the age of nineteen he went to Wheeling, in Western Virginia, where he served an apprenticeship and worked at the trade of saddler. He was evidently from the outset an earnest and thoughtful man. While his companions were prone to dissipation, he devoted his leisure hours to reading; and he was also a regular attendant on the meetings of his denomination. Wheeling being a great thoroughfare for the slave-trade, through which often passed the coffles of that nefarious traffic, his sympathies were largely enlisted in behalf of its helpless and hopeless victims. "My heart," he said, "was deeply grieved at the gross abomination. I heard the wail of the captive, I felt his pang of distress, and the iron entered my soul." Though he did not then and there enter upon what soon became his life work, yet he unquestionably received his baptism into the spirit of the great reform of which he was an honored pioneer, while largely instrumental in persuading others to enter upon it.

Even Mr. Garrison thus gratefully and gracefully refers to his obligations to Mr. Lundy: "Now, if I have in any way, however humble, done anything toward calling attention to slavery, or bringing about the glorious prospect of a complete jubilee in our country at no distant day, I feel that I owe everything in this matter, instrumentally and under God, to Benjamin Lundy. . . . I feel it due to the memory of one who devoted so many years of his life so faithfully to the

cause of the oppressed that I should state this reminiscence."

Having married, he settled in Ohio, a few miles west of Wheeling. He was prosperous in business, and happy in his domestic relations; "having," he said, "a loving wife and two beautiful little daughters, that it was a real happiness to possess and cherish." But, notwithstanding his success in business and the attractions of his home, he felt and yielded to the higher claims of humanity. His heart was troubled at the sad condition of the slaves, whose wrongs and sufferings he well knew. He enjoyed, he said, no peace of mind, and came to the conclusion that he must not only feel, but act for the suffering bondmen. Calling a few friends together at his house, he unbosomed his feelings. An antislavery organization, called "The Union Humane Society," was formed; which within a few months contained nearly five hundred members, residing in several counties in that section of the State. This society was formed in 1815. He soon issued an appeal to the philanthropists of the United States, in which he proposed that societies should be formed wherever a sufficient number of persons could be found to join them, with a uniform title and constitution. It was also suggested that these societies should correspond with each other, and co-operate in the general measures of their organization.

Not long afterward Mr. Charles Osborn commenced the publication of a journal at Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, called "The Philanthropist." For it Mr. Lundy furnished articles, and he was soon invited to take an interest in the paper and superintend the office. That he might be able to accept the invitation, he must disencumber himself of his business, which he unsuccessfully attempted to do by taking his stock in trade to St. Louis. Reaching that city in the midst of the Missouri struggle, and comprehending at a glance the nature of the question at issue, he entered into the conflict with great earnestness and vigor. Through the newspapers of Missouri and Illinois he portrayed the evils of slavery and the wickedness of its needless expansion.

Returning to Ohio, he commenced the publication of a paper

whose spirit and purpose were well expressed by its name, the "Genius of Universal Emancipation," — a journal that was destined from the start to a marked and stormy career. After several months it was removed to Tennessee, where it obtained quite a wide circulation, and was at that time the only distinctive antislavery paper in the country. During his residence there he visited Philadelphia for the purpose of attending the American Convention for the Abolition of Slavery, "travelling," he says, "six hundred miles on horseback in midwinter, and at his own expense," — a cost of time, labor, and money not often, if ever, equalled by the most devoted antislavery men of later years. During this time he made the acquaintance of other Abolitionists; and, though without much encouragement, concluded to remove his paper to Baltimore. "Having arranged," he said, "my business in Tennessee, I shouldered my knapsack, and set out for Baltimore on foot in the summer of 1824." At Deep Creek, North Carolina, he gave his first public lecture on slavery. He delivered fifteen or twenty antislavery addresses in different parts of the State, and assisted in the organization of a dozen antislavery societies, which largely and rapidly increased, until in three years they embraced some three thousand members, comprising many persons of position and eminence.

Pursuing his journey through the middle of Virginia, he held meetings, and effected the organization of several antislavery societies in that State. Arriving at Baltimore, where he proposed to establish his paper, he was received, he tells us, even by the antislavery men, "civilly, but coolly enough." They expressed strong doubts of his success, and gave him very little encouragement. Still he determined to persevere, and in 1824 commenced its publication. The next year he visited Hayti; but found, on his return, that his wife had died during his absence, that his home was broken up, and his children scattered. Collecting them, and placing them with friends in whom he confided, he says: "I renewed my vows to devote my energies to the cause of the slave, until the nation shall be effectually roused in his behalf." With the aid of a few warm friends, whose sympathy and counsel were freely



given, he not only continued the publication of his paper, but was successful in the organization of several societies.

Believing the question of emancipation to be a political one, he took a deep interest in the presidential election of 1824, and rendered effective service to the victorious party. He also avowed his readiness to support the Colonization Society, "if it united with its policy that great work of justice and righteousness, the total extirpation of slavery from the soil of America." Avowing emancipation to be the primary object with him, he could not for a moment think of joining in any colonization scheme which had not that object in view. In the summer of 1825 he commenced a series of articles on the domestic slave-trade, which greatly excited the slave-dealers of Baltimore, and unquestionably was the provoking cause of the brutal assault made upon him in the streets of that city, occasioning, in the end, his removal.

In the year 1826 the American Convention for the Abolition of Slavery was holden in Baltimore, through his influence; in which were represented, directly and indirectly, eighty-one societies, seventy-three being located in slaveholding States. There were at that time about one hundred and forty antislavery societies in the country, of which one hundred and six were in the Southern States. About the same time Mr. Lundy issued an address to the Abolitionists, maintaining that the most expedient course to be pursued was to "go straight forward with firmness and resolution in the road we have already begun to travel, neither turning to the right hand nor to the left, until we reach the glorious mansion where justice sits crowned with mercy, and where men esteem their fellow-men as brethren. For my own part," he said, "I never calculate *how soon* the cause of rational liberty will triumph over that of cruelty and despotism in the country." Though these were his sentiments of uncalculating devotion, and he was regardless of personal consequences and secondary considerations, it is evident, from some recorded remarks of his, a few months later, on the rapid growth of antislavery sentiment and societies during the twenty preceding years, that, like most of the early Abolitionists, he calculated on a far easier and ear-

lier triumph than the nation was destined to witness. They saw and felt the wickedness of slavery ; but they did not, as they could not, comprehend how firmly it was embedded in the very foundation of the civil, industrial, social, and ecclesiastical institutions of the country, or estimate aright the tenacity of its hold on life.

Mr. Lundy, however, clearly comprehended and fully acknowledged the necessity and the duty of political action. In commenting, in the summer of 1827, on the resolution of a county antislavery society in Ohio, that its members would support no persons for office who were not opposed to slavery, and who would not use all lawful means to remedy the evil by the most speedy and efficient measures, he declared that, if the friends of genuine republicanism would act upon that principle, a change for the better would soon be witnessed. He held it to be a grand mistake that the people of the free States had nothing to do with slaves. "They guarantee," he said, "the oppression of the colored man in this country. Let them wash their hands of the crime ; there is blood on every finger." Later he said : "I now fearlessly and boldly assert that the subject of slavery is no State-rights matter, but that all the citizens in this republic are interested in its extinction, and, if ever we abolish it, the influence and government of the United States must effect it." Still later, in 1837, he said : "The question of abolishing slavery, when it shall be acted on, must be settled at the ballot." Thus clearly defined and lucidly expressed were his views of the evil and its remedy. The discussions of thirty years did not materially enlarge or improve the argument.

In May, 1828, Mr. Lundy made a journey to the Eastern States. At New York he formed the acquaintance of Arthur Tappan. At Providence he met William Goodell, of whom, considering the latter's subsequent career, he has left the singular record : "I endeavored to arouse him, but he was at that time slow of speech on that subject." At Boston he said he could hear of no Abolitionists resident in the place. In the house where he boarded he met Mr. Garrison, whom he wished to find, but who had not then turned his attention particularly

to the subject, though he had noticed favorably his paper in "The National Philanthropist," a temperance journal he was then editing. He found in him a congenial spirit, most welcome in the surrounding apathy. Honestly inquiring and receptive, he not only responded favorably to his appeals, but rendered present aid in procuring subscribers and getting up meetings. Mr. Lundy also visited the clergy and called a meeting, at which eight were present, to whom he unfolded his plans. Most assented, — at least, did not oppose, — excepting one, whom he challenged to public debate. His challenge, however, was not accepted. He also visited New Hampshire, Maine, Connecticut, and New York. During this tour of five months he travelled hundreds of miles, often on foot, and delivered forty-three public addresses; "scattering," he said, "the seed of antislavery in strong and luxuriant soil," although it "was then the very winter of philanthropy."

Returning to Baltimore, he attended, as delegate from Maryland, the American Convention for the Abolition of Slavery. At this meeting it was resolved that the Convention should thereafter be permanently held in the city of Washington. One was held in the winter of 1829. But that was the last, notwithstanding this resolution, of a series of conventions inaugurated in 1794; so little did the antislavery men of those days understand the strength of the foe or their own weakness. But while others faltered, Mr. Lundy did not, though he felt the need of help. He remembered his visit to Boston, and his interview with Mr. Garrison; and he longed to have him for a coadjutor in this unequal strife. Accordingly, in the autumn of 1828, he visited New England, to persuade him, if possible, to join him in the editorial management of the "Genius." Mr. Garrison was then editing a paper in Vermont, and he thus describes Mr. Lundy's visit: "He had taken his staff in hand and travelled all the way to the Green Mountains. He came to lay it on my conscience and my soul that I should join him in this work of seeking the abolition of slavery. And he so presented the case, with the growing disposition I had to take up the cause, that I said to him: 'I will join you as soon as my engagement ends here; and then we will see what can be done.'"



In the summer of the following year Mr. Garrison, on Mr. Lundy's return from Hayti, fulfilled his promise, and became one of the editors of the paper, though the two were not in full accord in all their sentiments. But they were both honest and earnest, and their aims were one. Elizabeth Margaret Chandler was also engaged as an assistant, and the paper was changed from a monthly to a weekly journal, and was vigorously conducted in the interests of temperance, emancipation, and peace. Miss Chandler soon issued an appeal to the ladies of the United States, urging them to enlist in the cause of emancipation, and to form female antislavery societies, like those in Great Britain.

At about the same time Mr. Lundy announced through his columns, that the American government was attempting a negotiation with Mexico for the purchase of Texas. With his usual practical sagacity, assuming that all such attempted negotiations were made for the support of slavery, he sounded the alarm and began an opposition which he never remitted. Nor was he content with this general protest; he soon proceeded, at the cost of much personal sacrifice, exposure, and danger, to visit and travel once and again over large portions of that country and of Mexico, often in disguise. By this personal inspection, made in the general behalf of the slave and escaped fugitives, he became familiar with the whole Texan plot, so that the information gained was of great service to John Quincy Adams and others during the annexation struggle, even then casting its baleful shadows before.

The connection between Mr. Lundy and Mr. Garrison was not, however, productive of all the good the former had fondly anticipated. The growing exasperation of the slaveholding portion of the city at any interference with the system was greatly intensified and brought to a crisis by the severe attacks of Mr. Garrison upon the domestic slave-traffic in general, and upon the conduct of a New England master of a vessel, in particular, in taking a cargo of slaves to the New Orleans market. A prosecution, trial, conviction, and imprisonment were the result, rendering a dissolution of their partnership inevitable. Another circumstance had unquestionably added

fuel to the flame already burning fiercely. A colored man, in Boston, by the name of Walker, had published a pamphlet, which was freely condemned by Mr. Lundy, in which, arraigning with terrible and merciless severity the slave-masters for their wrongs inflicted on the poor bondmen, and breathing a most vindictive spirit, he counselled the colored race to take vengeance into their own hands.

Consequently, when Mr. Garrison had been driven from the city, the same spirit of persecution followed Mr. Lundy. The governor required him to give bail, libel suits and threatened imprisonment lowered, and personal outrage and violence in the streets rendered longer residence unsafe. He was finally compelled to succumb and remove his paper to Washington. Through his influence, while in that city, an antislavery society was formed ; and a memorial, signed by more than a thousand citizens of the District of Columbia, was presented to Congress for the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade.

His paper failing for want of patronage, he started another in 1836, in Philadelphia, called the "National Inquirer." Retiring from this in 1838, and being succeeded by John G. Whittier, who changed the name to "The Pennsylvania Freeman," he proposed to go West, and resume the publication of the "Genius" in some town in the great valley. Having gathered up his little store of earthly possessions, he deposited them in the new Pennsylvania Hall, which, with his deposit, was burned by the mob in the spring of 1838. Nothing daunted or disheartened by what he termed this "total sacrifice on the altar of universal emancipation," saying, "they have not yet got my conscience, they have not taken my heart," he still persisted in his purpose of going West. After many disappointments, he succeeded in getting out a few numbers ; but, for lack of funds and help, it could not be said to have been established. But the good man's work was finished. He was attacked with the fever of the country, and, after a brief illness, died on the 23d of August, 1839, in the fifty-first year of his age.

Thus passed away in the prime of his manhood and in the full maturity of his powers one of the most humane, unselfish,

laborious, and persistent of men. There have been abler men, men rendering greater service ; but few have possessed more largeness of heart, more uncalculating self-abnegation, or have filled up the measure of their lives with more self-sacrificing labors for the good of others. From the year 1820 to 1830 he states that he travelled twenty-five thousand miles, five thousand on foot ; that he visited nineteen States, made two voyages to Hayti, and delivered more than two hundred public addresses. Nor were the last nine years of his life less replete with like achievements. During those years, in addition to his other abundant labors, he made several tours to Canada, Texas, and Mexico, in the earnest, but vain search after shelter and relief for the lowly ones who could not find protection in their native land. Indeed, as richly did he merit, as he on whom it was bestowed, — as his service was more laborious, more protracted, and more widely extended, — the splendid eulogium of Burke on the philanthropist Howard : “ His was a voyage of discovery, a circumnavigation of charity.”

And this service was rendered under circumstances well calculated to try his temper and test his strength of principle ; for not only did he perform those journeyings often on foot and always without the modern appliances of travel, but most of his multitudinous labors were performed without the stimulus of success or the cheering words of sympathy and encouragement. His pilgrimage from Maryland to Vermont, “ staff in hand,” for the simple chance of enlisting a co-laborer was sadly significant. He was called to lead the “ forlorn hope ” of a desperate cause against opposing foes increasing in numbers and flushed with recent victories. And not only that, but he was compelled to witness the manifest decadence of the spirit of liberty in the government, and of resistance to the demands of slavery among the masses of his countrymen.

Twenty-three years of such labor, under such circumstances, are not often paralleled even in the annals of Christian missions and reforms. Well does his biographer, Mr. Thomas Earle, say of him : “ Having resolved, twenty-three years before his decease, to devote his energies to the relief of the suffering slave and the oppressed man of color, he persevered



to the end, undeterred by difficulties and undismayed by dangers, undiscouraged by disappointments and unsubdued by sacrifices. Alone, often on foot, he encountered fatigue, hunger, and exposure, the frosts and snows of winter, the rains and scorching sun of summer, the contagion of pestilence and the miasmatic effluvia of insalubrious regions, ever pressing onward toward the attainment of the great object to which he had dedicated his existence."

In the great conflict between freedom and slavery in America many names became historic, a few illustrious. No person is more inseparably associated with that struggle than William Lloyd Garrison. Men have differed, do and will differ, in their estimate of his distinctive doctrines and modes of action, and of his influence on the final result; but he will ever be associated in their memories with the conflict which emancipated one race and broke the power of another.

Born at Newburyport, Massachusetts, December 12, 1804, Mr. Garrison learned the art of printing, and commenced his editorial career at twenty-one years of age. He was first connected with the "Free Press," in his native town; next with the "National Philanthropist," a temperance paper, published in Boston; then with the "Journal of the Times," at Bennington, Vermont; then with the "Genius of Universal Emancipation," at Baltimore; and finally, with "The Liberator," which he established in Boston, January 1, 1831, and of which he was the editor during the thirty-five years of its existence. During these forty years of continuous editorial service he evinced singular personal independence, rare moral courage, and an uncompromising fidelity to his convictions and to the claims of humanity.

While at Boston, in the spring of 1828, he became acquainted with Benjamin Lundy, then on his first tour to the Eastern States in the service of the slave. He there listened to the cogent reasonings and was moved by the tender appeals of that singularly disinterested and tireless champion, who had consecrated his life to the cause of his oppressed countrymen, and ever gratefully acknowledged these obligations.

When, in 1828, Mr. Garrison assumed the editorial control

of the "Journal of the Times," at Bennington, Vermont, he announced in his editorial address that the paper would be independent in the broadest and stoutest signification of the term; that it should be trammelled by no interest, biassed by no sect, awed by no power. He distinctly avowed that he had three objects in view, which he should pursue through life, whether in that place or elsewhere; and those three objects were "the suppression of intemperance and its associate vices, the gradual emancipation of every slave in the Republic, and the perpetuity of national peace." He pledged himself that what might be wanting in vigor should be made up in zeal. This independence and this avowal elicited from Mr. Lundy, who had sought to secure Mr. Garrison's services for his "Genius of Universal Emancipation," the warmest commendations, because he had shown "a laudable disposition to advocate the claims of the poor, distressed African upon our sympathy and justice." And he declared, if he continued to advocate the cause of the unfortunate negro, that "his talents will render him a most valuable coadjutor in this holy undertaking."

Mr. Garrison continued his connection with the "Journal of the Times" for several months; but in the latter part of the summer of 1829 he became associated with Mr. Lundy in the editorship of his paper, in Baltimore. In this new field he was brought into more immediate contact with slavery; and yet his utterances were no less decided and strong, still proclaiming his unrelenting hostility to slavery, intemperance, and war. Although at first he had looked with favor on the colonization scheme, as "an auxiliary to abolition" deserving encouragement, yet utterly inadequate alone, a short residence at Baltimore, and a fuller acquaintance with the spirit and purposes of its advocates, soon led him to discard and denounce it, and from that time onward to become one of its most uncompromising foes. On the subject of slavery he claimed that slaves were entitled to complete and immediate emancipation; that expediency had no place in the consideration of questions of simple right; that, even if the question of expediency were admitted into the discussion, it remained true that the sooner the chains were broken the wiser the act; and that, if the idea

of removing the slaves from the country were not visionary, as he contended it was, all colored people born on the soil had the right to remain, and none had the right to compel their removal.

The sinfulness of slavery and the duty of immediate emancipation had been often proclaimed before, — at least, in substance, if not in the precise phraseology of the new formula. Edwards, Hopkins, and Emmons, of the last century, as Wesley before them, who had condensed his estimate of the system into that burning and oft-repeated sentence, "Slavery is the sum of all villanies," had stated, as strongly as language could express the thought, the essential wrongfulness of the system, and the duty of immediate repentance, with the consequent fruits meet for repentance. Rev. John Rankin, whose name is honorably associated with the earlier antislavery efforts of the present century, was a native of Tennessee; and he testifies that in his "boyhood" a majority of the people of Eastern Tennessee, though not of the State, were Abolitionists. In Kentucky, where he was first settled in the ministry, he says: "We had our abolition societies, auxiliary to a State society then existing." He spoke openly against the "sin" of slavery, while the people of his church showed the sincerity of their opposition by leaving the State almost as a body, because of the increasing proslavery spirit of the people therein. At an anniversary meeting of the American Antislavery Society at New York, he declared that he himself and the antislavery societies of the South believed and avowed the doctrine of immediate emancipation.

In Ohio the antislavery sentiment was not only decided, but active. Indeed, several years before the formation of the American Antislavery Society the Chillicothe Presbytery made strenuous efforts to purge the Presbyterian Church of the sin of slavery. The Cincinnati Synod, on motion of Dr. Samuel Crothers, unanimously "resolved that the holding of slaves for gain is heinous sin and scandal." In 1825 Elizabeth Heyrick, of England, a member of the Society of Friends, had published a pamphlet, entitled, "Immediate, not Gradual Emancipation," which was somewhat in advance of the general sentiment of the British people, though they were not long in



arriving at the same conclusion. It is stated, however, by Oliver Johnson, who had it on the highest authority, that Mr. Garrison had not seen the work before he wrought out the same sentiment in his own mind, basing his conclusion on the two-fold grounds of "moral duty and logical necessity." There can be no doubt that the new circumstances in which Mr. Garrison found himself, with the sad and revolting scenes which were daily enacted before his eyes in a slaveholding community, and in a slave-mart like Baltimore, quickened both mind and heart, and hastened convictions to which he soon arrived, and which, when reached, he was not slow to enunciate in language unequivocal and strong. For not only was slavery there, with its ordinary incidents of "wrong and outrage," but Baltimore was then, next to Richmond, the great Northern slave-mart of the Border States. It was the slave-trader's exchange, where was the slave-prison and where could be witnessed the revolting atrocities of the auction-block and the saddening exhibitions of the cofle and the slave-ship, with their heart-breaking partings, their apprehensions, and their despairing dread of impending evils. In a community where such scenes were common, and among a people accustomed to them and acquiescent in them, Mr. Garrison was not long in tracing the logic of the system, and in detecting the real tendency of colonization, and the empty pretensions of those who advocated it as a means of removing the evils of the system of oppression.

The subject, however, which more particularly stirred his soul and fired his indignation, and which called forth his fiercest anathemas, was the interstate slave-trade. In the prosecution of this general traffic an incident and illustration soon occurred which especially excited his feelings, and called forth his sternest rebukes and his most objurgatory language. The captain of a vessel owned by Francis Todd, of his own native town of Newburyport, took, with the owner's consent, a cargo of slaves for the New Orleans market. In consequence of the severity of his rebuke and his unmeasured words of condemnation, both a civil and criminal suit were instituted against Mr. Garrison. Tried by a proslavery court and jury, he was,

of course, convicted, and his sentence embraced both imprisonment and fine.

The knowledge of this, and the great wrong done to an American citizen simply for language employed only in behalf of freedom and against oppression, excited a good deal of feeling, as it became known, among the philanthropists of the time. The case was brought by Mr. Lundy to the notice of that munificent as well as earnest friend of the slave, Arthur Tappan of New York, who at once paid the fine ; so that, after an incarceration of seven weeks, Mr. Garrison was set free. It is said that Henry Clay was on the point of doing the same thing, through the earnest solicitation of John G. Whittier, who represented to him that Mr. Garrison had been an earnest and effective advocate of the election of John Quincy Adams. This action of the agents of slavery completed the work already far advanced, and made Mr. Garrison ever afterward an uncompromising, if not a bitter foe, not only to slavery, but to everything that interposed itself between him and the object of his unconquerable aversion and determined hostility. Nothing was too high or too low, nothing was too strong or too sacred, to escape his fierce denunciations. No iconoclast ever dashed down more remorselessly the idols of popular regard. The oath of eternal hostility to Rome which the youthful Hannibal was made to swear was not more sacredly kept than was the vow of the young reformer, as he went forth from that Baltimore prison, against that power which held millions of his countrymen in chains, and which would silence free speech and destroy the liberty of the press.

Imprisonment neither intimidated nor silenced him. From that Baltimore jail he sent forth a letter in which he arraigned the law and the arbitrary conduct of the court. "Is it," he asked, "supposed by Judge Brice that his frowns can intimidate me, or his sentence stifle my voice on the subject of oppression ? He does not know me. So long as a good Providence gives me strength and intellect, I will not cease to declare that the existence of slavery in this country is a foul reproach to the American name ; nor will I hesitate to proclaim the guilt of kidnappers, slavery abettors, or slave-owners,

wherever they may reside, or however high they may be exalted. I am only in the *alphabet* of my task; time shall perfect a useful work. It is my shame that I have done so little for the people of color; yea, before God, I feel humbled that my feelings are so cold and my language so weak. A free white victim must be sacrificed to open the eyes of the nation, and to show the tyranny of our laws. I expect, and am willing to be persecuted, imprisoned, and bound for advocating the rights of my colored countrymen; and I should deserve to be a slave myself if I shrank from that danger."

This violent individual demonstration was, however, but significant of the general feeling and policy toward this anti-slavery sheet and its heroic conductors. Nor did the persecutions, slanders, and libel suits which they prompted fail of their purpose. Former friends timidly shrunk from the fierce conflict, and withheld both their moral and pecuniary support; and even these earnest and brave men were compelled so far to succumb to the popular pressure as to dissolve their partnership, and the paper was changed from a weekly to a monthly journal. But, though not agreed in all things, they parted with "the kindest feelings and mutual personal regard." Mr. Lundy declared that Mr. Garrison "had proven himself a faithful and able coadjutor in the great and holy cause"; and the latter, in separating from his philanthropic friend, expressed the hope that "we shall ever remain one in spirit and purpose."

After his liberation from prison, in June, 1830, Mr. Garrison proceeded North, delivering a course of antislavery lectures in Philadelphia, New York, New Haven, Hartford, Boston, Charlestown, and other cities and towns of New England. In these lectures he maintained the sinfulness of slavery, and the duty of immediate and unconditional emancipation. The colonization scheme, which had obtained a strong hold upon the confidence and support of the churches and the benevolent people of the North, was sternly arraigned, and the designs of its originators were declared to be hostile to the free people of color in the slaveholding States. Earnest appeals were made, especially to members of Christian churches, to engage at



once in the work of immediate and unconditional emancipation, which was proclaimed to be the duty of the people and the right of the slave. But these views were far in advance of the prevailing sentiments of even most of the members of the churches; and although some gladly accepted them, the many were either hostile or indifferent. It was often with difficulty, therefore, that churches were opened for his addresses, and sometimes they were positively refused.

In the month of August he issued proposals for the publication of a journal, to be called "The Liberator," in the city of Washington. The proposition, though hailed with favor by a few persons in different sections of the country, was "palsied by public indifference." The persecutions against Mr. Lundy had also been so great in Baltimore that he had been compelled to remove the "Genius of Universal Emancipation" to the seat of the Federal government, thus rendering the establishment of "The Liberator" there less necessary.

But there was another reason for changing the place of the publication of the proposed journal. This reason is given by Mr. Garrison in his first number, which was published in Boston, in January, 1831:—

"During my recent tour," he says, "for the purpose of exciting the minds of the people by a series of discourses on the subject of slavery, every place that I visited gave fresh evidence of the fact that a greater revolution in public sentiment was to be effected in the free States, and particularly in New England, than at the South. I found contempt more bitter, detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn, and apathy more frozen than among slave-owners themselves. Of course, there were individual exceptions to the contrary. This state of things afflicted, but did not dishearten me. I determined at every hazard to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation, within sight of Bunker Hill, and in the birthplace of Liberty. That standard is now unfurled; and long may it float, unhurt by the spoliations of time or the missiles of a desperate foe,—yea, till every chain be broken and every bondman set free! Let Southern oppressors tremble,—let their secret abettors tremble,—let

their Northern apologists tremble, — let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble ! ”

In establishing “The Liberator,” Mr. Garrison announced that he should not array himself as the political partisan of any man, and that, in defending the great cause of human rights, he wished “to derive the assistance of all religions and of all parties.”

Many persons, however, who had become deeply interested in Mr. Garrison’s addresses in the summer and autumn deemed his language too vituperative, denunciatory, and severe. Some of his earliest and most intimate friends, who earnestly desired the success of his cause, had often remonstrated with him. In his salutatory address, referring to these remonstrances, he said :—

“I am aware that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I *will* be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject I do not wish to think or speak or write with moderation. No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest, — I will not equivocate, — I will not excuse, — I will not retreat a single inch, — AND I WILL BE HEARD. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead ! ”

To those who questioned the wisdom of his course, he replied :—

“It is pretended that I am retarding the cause of emancipation by the coarseness of my invective and the precipitancy of my measures. The charge is not true. On this question my influence, humble as it is, is felt at this moment to a considerable extent, and shall be felt in coming years, not perniciously, but beneficially, — not as a curse, but as a blessing; and posterity will bear testimony that I was right. I desire to thank God that he enables me to disregard ‘the fear of man

that bringeth a snare,' and to speak his truth in its simplicity and power."

He closed with the vow to oppose and thwart the brutalizing sway of oppression,

"till Afric's chains  
Are burst, and freedom rules the rescued land."

Mr. Garrison's partner in the publication of "The Liberator" was Mr. Isaac Knapp, a printer, like himself, and also a native of the same town. The paper was commenced without funds and without a single subscriber. Bearing the comprehensive and cosmopolitan motto, "My country is the world, my countrymen are all mankind," it appealed to no party, sect, or interest for recognition and support. Both editor and printer labored hard and fared meagrely; and it was only thus — and a marvel it was at that — that their journal lived. But Mr. Garrison had a mission to fulfil, and he bravely met the conditions it imposed. For, whatever may be the estimate of his policy, and whatever may have been his mistakes, none can withhold the meed of admiration at the moral courage and faith he exhibited as he entered upon his life's work. Hardly grander were their exhibition when Kepler was working out his problem of the solar system, willing to "wait a century for a reader"; when Columbus was traveling through Europe, from court to court, from philosopher to prince, in the vain search for a convert to his new theory of a western passage to the Indies; or even when Luther was nailing his theses to the door of the church, and thus braving the thunders of the Vatican, than when that young man — with no advantages of birth or culture, with wounds still bleeding from his recent encounter with the dark and bloody tyrant, in his dingy room of sixteen feet square, at once his sanctum, workshop, and home — made assault upon a despotism which not only trampled millions of slaves in the dust, but dominated the whole country, binding both church and state in chains, and there forged his weapons of warfare from the indestructible materials of God's Word and the Declaration of Independence. It must have been something more than "the grace of indignation" which urged him on, which



crowned him with the honors of imprisonment, gave him the garland of a rope, the escort of a mob of Boston's "respectability and standing," and extorted such honorable mention by Southern governors and legislatures as can now be gathered from their records.

It was not that Mr. Garrison discovered any new truths, or that he stood alone, which gave him his prominence from the start. The sinfulness of slaveholding and the duty of its immediate relinquishment had been as unequivocally proclaimed by others, and there were those then in the field as decided and pronounced as he. It must have arisen partly, at least, from the peculiar state of public opinion at that time. After the crowning triumph of the Slave Power in the Missouri Compromise, and in the sectional victory of the South, by the defeat of Mr. Adams and the election of General Jackson, there seemed to be a general acquiescence on the part of the people in these triumphs, and a growing disposition to remit further antislavery effort.

The nation had reached its nadir; for, though there were subsequently other aggressions, more flagrant outrages, and new concessions and compromises, yet never after that was the nation so voiceless and timid. Cowed and silent before the domineering Power, with the number of protestants growing fewer and feebler, the very boldness and seeming audacity of the young man in his attic, telling the nation that he was in earnest and would be heard, aroused attention. The very deliberation with which he heralded and began the assault, the stern defiance he bade the foe at whose feet he threw the gauntlet of mortal combat, made him the mark for criticism and hostile demonstration, as well as the rallying point of those who sympathized with him in spirit and in purpose. His impartiality, too, between sects and parties, men and schools, constitutions and laws, and whatever arrayed itself against the slave or remained neutral, increased that attention and criticism.

His pen, if possible, was more severe, caustic, and exasperating than had been his speech. While friends generally doubted and questioned, and the people condemned, the

slaveholders were stung to madness. Before the close of the first year, the Vigilance Association of Columbia, South Carolina, "composed of gentlemen of the first respectability," offered a reward of fifteen hundred dollars for the apprehension and conviction of any white person detected in circulating in that State "the newspaper called 'The Liberator.'" The corporation of Georgetown, in the District of Columbia, passed an ordinance rendering it penal for any free person of color to take from the post-office "the paper published in Boston called 'The Liberator,'" the punishment for each offence to be twenty dollars' fine or thirty days' imprisonment. In case the offender was not able to pay the fine, or the fees for imprisonment, he was to be sold into slavery for four months. The grand jury of Raleigh, North Carolina, at the instigation of the attorney-general, made an indictment against the editor and publisher of "The Liberator" for its circulation in that county. The legislature of Georgia proceeded to pass an act, which was promptly signed by Governor Lumpkin, offering a reward of five thousand dollars for the arrest, prosecution, and trial to conviction, under the laws of the State, of the editor or publisher "of a certain paper called 'The Liberator,' published in the town of Boston and State of Massachusetts."

But neither the doubts of friends, the condemnation of the North, nor the threats and offered rewards of the South, moved Mr. Garrison from his purpose. He bade defiance to his persecutors, and avowed his readiness to die, if need be. He stood, he says, "like the oak, like the Alps,—unshaken, storm-proof. Opposition and abuse and slander and prejudice and judicial tyranny add to the flame of my zeal. I am not discouraged; I am not dismayed; but bolder and more confident than ever."

Nor is there any doubt that his voice and pen were among the most potent influences that produced the antislavery revival of that day. Antislavery societies were formed, antislavery presses were established, and antislavery lectures abounded. Nine years after the establishment of "The Liberator" there were nearly two thousand antislavery societies, with a mem-

bership of some two hundred thousand. This result, however, was not secured without agitation, controversy, and strife. Nor were these all outside of the societies. Within them were discords and dissensions, growing out of the nature of their work and the character of their members. For the latter were generally, and almost of necessity, persons of positive convictions and self-assertion, engaged in a work of appalling magnitude and beset with unanticipated difficulties. Especially true was this of those who gathered around Mr. Garrison, adopted and defended his views, and recognized him as their leader. Embracing many men, and especially women, of talent, culture, and eloquence, they were a small, compact, aggressive, and somewhat destructive body, who, with marked characteristics and occasional idiosyncrasies, yet seemed to be swayed by a common impulse, and to be committed not only to a common object, but to the pursuit of that object by modes peculiarly their own.

In pursuance of their object, they avowed the purpose of granting quarter to nothing which, in their apprehension, interposed itself between them and that object. Not finding that hearty co-operation and ready acquiescence in their utterances and modes of action in church or state which they desired or hoped for, but oftener hostility and persecution, they soon arrayed themselves in antagonism to the leading influences of both. And so, singularly enough, they presented what appeared to their countrymen the practical solecism of endeavoring to reform the government by renouncing all connection with it; of seeking to remove a political evil by refusing all association with political parties, by whose action alone that evil could be reached; of depending alone on moral suasion, and an appeal to the consciences of the people, and yet coming out of all the religious associations and assemblies of the land. This arraying themselves against the patriotism, the partisanship, and the religious sentiment of the great body of the people prevented harmonious co-operation, and rendered inevitable, sooner or later, a disruption of the national society. In that separation, which took place in 1840, but a small part remained with Mr. Garrison, — probably not more than one



fifth of the members of the antislavery societies then existing; and these were confined mainly to New England, and mostly to Eastern Massachusetts. Nor did their numbers increase during the conflicts of the subsequent twenty years. Indeed, it is doubtful whether, in 1860, when Mr. Lincoln was elected by a vote of nearly two millions, on a clearly defined and distinct issue with the Slave Power, there were more Abolitionists of that school than there were twenty years before, when the American Antislavery Society was rent in twain. During all this period, however, they acted, as they professed, "without concealment and without compromise." Whatever may be the estimate of the weight of their influence on public opinion, none will ever doubt the sincerity of their convictions, the purity of their motives, the boldness of their utterances, or the inflexibility of their purposes.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE VIRGINIA CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION. — SOUTHAMPTON INSURRECTION. — SLAVERY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATURE.

Constitutional Convention. — Struggle between Eastern and Western Virginia. — Slaveholding Interest Successful. — Southampton Insurrection. — Nat Turner. — Message of Governor Floyd. — Resolution of Mr. Summers. — Debate on Slavery. — Proposition of Thomas Jefferson Randolph. — Mr. Goode's Motion to discharge the Committee. — Report of the Committee. — Mr. Preston's Amendment. — Speeches of Mr. Moore, Mr. Bolling, Mr. Randolph, Mr. Rives, Mr. Brodnax, Mr. Daniel, Mr. Faulkner, Mr. Knox, Mr. Summers, Mr. McDowell. — The "Richmond Inquirer." — Reaction in the State.

THE utterances of slaveholders in the Virginia convention of 1829–30, and in her legislature of 1831–32, were suggestive of far more than their immediate intent. They revealed, in language as strong and unequivocal as any ever used by Abolitionists, so freely charged with extravagance and exaggeration, the evils and appalling dangers of slavery. They revealed, too, both the sense of insecurity and alarm which pervaded society, and the desperation of a growing class determined to cling to the evil, however great, and to risk the consequences, however serious.

The convention was called for the revision of its constitution. Ex-Presidents Madison and Monroe, Chief Justice Marshall, and several eminent statesmen, were members. For years much dissatisfaction had existed in the western section of the State, where there were comparatively few slaves, with the basis of representation, which gave political power to a minority of the white people in the tide-water and eastern portions of the State. This minority, largely composed of slaveholders, was strong in talent, in wealth, and in social position.

The members from Western and Middle Virginia proposed to base representation on white population alone. The com-

mittee on the legislative department of the constitution, by a vote of thirteen to eleven, reported in favor of the white basis for the House, but by an equally divided vote rejected the proposition to adopt it for the Senate. An earnest and excited struggle commenced, and continued through several weeks. A proposition to base the Senate on federal numbers and the House on white population was also defeated by a similar vote. An arbitrary apportionment was finally adopted, and the representatives of the "old families," who were the special guardians of the slaveholding section, triumphed over those who had, at the opening of the convention, cherished high hopes of wresting political power from them. And so here, as was generally the case everywhere, in the conflicts between the supporters and opposers of the Slave Power, the latter were overborne.

In the month of August, 1831, the people of Virginia were startled by the Southampton insurrection. Its leader was Nat Turner, then a slave about thirty-one years of age. From childhood he seemed to have been the victim of superstition and fanaticism, and to have grown up in the belief that he was destined to accomplish some great purpose. Austere in life and manners, he impressed upon his personal associates the conviction that he was a prophet of the Lord, and that he was guided by Divine inspiration. In his confession he said: "On the 12th of May, 1828, I heard a loud noise in the heavens, and the spirit instantly appeared to me and said, 'The serpent was loosened, and Christ had laid down the yoke he had borne for the sins of men, and that I should take it on and fight against the serpent, for the time was fast approaching when the first should be last and the last should be first, and by signs in the heavens that it would make known to me when I should commence the great work, and until the first sign should appear I should conceal it from the knowledge of men.'"

On the appearance of the sign, which was to be the eclipse of the sun in February, 1831, he was to arise and slay his enemies. He states that immediately on the appearance of that sign the seal was removed from his lips, and he communicated the great work he had to do to his associates. The 4th of July was fixed

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upon as the day for rising, but his mind was so affected by the magnitude of the undertaking that he fell sick, and that time passed. "The sign appeared again," he said, and he then determined to wait no longer. The insurrection commenced on the night of the 21st of August by the massacre of his master, Mr. Joseph Travis, and his family. He and his associates had agreed that until they could arm and equip themselves and could raise a sufficient force, neither age nor sex should be spared; and this policy was invariably pursued. They proceeded from house to house, massacring the whites, until their numbers were increased to more than fifty, — all mounted and armed with guns and swords, axes and clubs. But the country was soon aroused, and they were met, fired upon, and dispersed. Deserted by his associates, Turner, after concealing himself for several weeks, was discovered, tried, and executed in November of that year. In this insurrection sixty-one white persons and more than a hundred slaves were killed or executed. The excitement in Virginia and throughout the South was intense. The "Richmond Whig" declared that another such insurrection would be followed by putting the whole black race to the sword. Portions of the community were thrown into panic, and the thrilling cry of the affrighted people, in peril of their lives and imploring protection, day after day filled the ears of the governor of that great commonwealth.

The legislature met early in December. In his message Governor Floyd called its attention to the Southampton insurrection. He stated that a "banditti of slaves," not exceeding at any time seventy in number, rose upon the defenceless inhabitants, and, under circumstances of the most "shocking and horrid barbarity," put to death sixty-one persons. He commended the promptitude and despatch with which the officers and militia had performed their duty, as also the cheerful alacrity of the people. He commended, too, the officers, soldiers, and sailors of the United States army and navy for their prompt and efficient action. Asserting that there was reason to believe that the spirit of insurrection was not confined to the slaves, he declared that there was too much cause for the suspicion that the plans of "treason, insurrection, and mur-

der" had been "designed and matured by unrestrained fanatics in some of the neighboring States." Asserting, too, that the most active among themselves in stirring up "the spirit of revolt" were the negro preachers, he expressed the conviction that the public good required that they should be silenced. He urged a revision of the laws intended to preserve "in due subordination" the slave population, and suggested the idea that it would be indispensably necessary to remove the free people of color from the State.

So much of the governor's message as related to the insurrection was referred to a committee. Mr. Summers of Western Virginia submitted a resolution, calling on the governor to lay before the legislature a copy of the correspondence between Governor Monroe and President Jefferson, in 1801, upon the subject of obtaining lands beyond the limits of the State, to which free persons of color might be removed. Petitions were presented, signed by slaveholders, praying the legislature for the removal of free negroes. Among these petitions was one from the Society of Friends, suggesting that legislative measures might be taken for the emancipation of slaves, and for their removal from the State. On the question of the reference of this petition to a special committee, a debate of great earnestness and significance arose. Mr. Roane, who had presented it, made a temperate argument in favor of its reception and reference. Mr. Moore said that the free negro population was a nuisance which the interests of the people required to be removed. But there was, he said, "another and greater nuisance, — slavery itself." He avowed that he was not one of those fanatics, always crying out against the horrors of slavery, but he thought it should now be considered by the legislature and by the people themselves. The reference of the petition to the committee was advocated by Mr. Brodnax, its chairman. The hearing of the petition, he said, did not imply that any legislation would be recommended for the emancipation of slaves; but he was opposed to allowing the nations to believe that "the State of Virginia was not willing even to think of an ultimate delivery from the greatest curse that God in his wrath ever inflicted upon a people." He emphatically declared that when

men were forced to lock their doors at night, and open them in the morning to receive their servants to light their fires, with pistols in their hands, surely some measures to restore confidence and security were necessary. Under such circumstances "life became a burden, and it were better to seek a home in some distant realm, and leave the graves of their fathers, than endure so precarious a condition." "Is there a man," he asked, "in Virginia who does not lament that there ever was a slave in the State? And is there a man who considers the decay of our prosperity, and the retrograde movement of this once flourishing commonwealth, who does not attribute this to the pregnant cause of slavery?"

Mr. Bolling avowed himself in favor of considering the petition. "We talk of freedom," he said, "while slavery exists in the land, and speak with horror of the tyranny of the Turk; but we foster an evil which the best interests of the community require should be removed, which was deemed the bane of our happiness by the fathers of the commonwealth, and to which we trace the cause of the depression of Eastern Virginia. Every intelligent individual admits that slavery is the most pernicious of all the evils with which the body politic can be afflicted. By none is this position denied, if we except the erratic John Randolph, who goes about like a troubled spirit, malignantly assaulting every individual against whom his spleen is excited."

Mr. Chandler expressed his desire for the removal of the free blacks, and for a plan that might remove, at some future time, "the greatest curse that has ever been inflicted upon this State." He declared that he should look upon the day on which "the deliverance of the Commonwealth from the burdens of slavery should be consummated as the most glorious in the annals of Virginia." William C. Rives was opposed to any plan of emancipation, because its agitation at that time would be "injudicious, if not perilous." The rejection of this petition of the Quakers was moved by Mr. Goode; but his motion was rejected by a vote of more than three to one, and its reference to the special committee was carried.

A day or two afterwards Mr. Goode, who assumed the



championship of the slaveholders, rose and asked the select committee what progress had been made, and when it intended to report. To this question the chairman replied that it was vigorously pursuing its investigation, and he hoped to report in a few days. Mr. Goode then said that he believed the course that had been taken would be productive of dangerous consequences ; and he gave notice that he should, the next day, submit a resolution that would save the committee from further investigation. In accordance with this notice he introduced a resolution to discharge the committee, declaring that it was not expedient to legislate further on the subject of emancipation.

Thomas Jefferson Randolph, a grandson of Mr. Jefferson, moved to amend the resolution so as to instruct the committee to inquire into the expediency of submitting to a vote of the qualified electors the proposition of providing by law that the children of female slaves, born after the 4th of July, 1840, should become the property of the commonwealth, the males at the age of twenty-one, the females at the age of eighteen ; then to be hired out until a sufficient sum be realized to defray the expense of their removal beyond the limits of the United States. But even this moderate proposition was resisted by Mr. Goode, who declared that the continuance of the discussion would prolong the anxieties of the citizens, and excite hopes in the colored population which must be disappointed. While Mr. Goode's resolution to discharge the committee was under consideration, the committee reported that it was inexpedient for the legislature to make any enactments for the abolition of slavery, and the question of its disposition was at once made the subject of discussion. Mr. Newton was in favor of laying the report of the committee on the table, and of taking up Mr. Randolph's amendment, which he denounced as a monstrous proposition that struck at the foundation of republican government. The motion to lay upon the table was then rejected, and Mr. Preston, afterward Secretary of the Navy under President Taylor, moved, as an amendment to the report, to strike out the word "inexpedient" and insert the word "expedient."

Then commenced an elaborate and exhaustive debate, which continued without limitation or restriction for several weeks. It was one of the ablest, most eloquent, and brilliant debates that ever took place in the legislature of any of the States. Most of those who participated in it were young and rising men, who afterward achieved high positions and commanding influence. Many of them then clearly saw and vividly set forth the terrible evils which slavery had wrought, and the appalling difficulties and dangers that beset them. Yet, clearly as they saw them and vividly as they portrayed them, they not only failed to comprehend their full import, but they entirely failed in marking out the way of escape, and in devising the means for their extrication.

Mr. Moore said that the apostle might as well have closed his eyes upon the light which shone from heaven, or have turned a deaf ear to the voice from on high, as for the legislature to stifle the spirit of inquiry as to the best means of freeing Virginia from the curse of slavery, — “the severest calamity that has ever befallen any portion of the human race.” Among the many evils he pointed out and forcibly portrayed was “its irresistible tendency to undermine and destroy everything like virtue and morality in the community.” Asserting that ignorance was the inseparable companion of slavery, he declared it to be the purpose of the master to see that “the ignorance of his slaves shall be as profound as possible.” Maintaining that this ignorance rendered the slave incapable of deciding between right and wrong, he affirmed that he was never actuated by those inspiring and ennobling motives that prompt the free to praiseworthy deeds; and that he was habituated from his infancy to sacrifice truth without remorse, to escape the punishment too apt to be inflicted. He averred that the impulses of passion were never restrained in him by the dread of infamy and disgrace. Referring to the declining prosperity of Virginia, he said that the State below tide-water wore “an appearance of almost utter desolation, distressing to the beholder”; that “tall and thick forests of pine, everywhere to be seen encroaching upon the once cultivated fields, cast a deep gloom over the

land, which looked as if nature mourned over the misfortunes of man." Maintaining that it was due to their character as a magnanimous people not to withhold from their negroes rights they had declared to be the common property of the human race, he would make a determined effort to free their Commonwealth of this element of disgrace and danger. He declared that it mattered not whether oppression was exercised over few individuals or over millions ; that "the autocrat of Russia was no more deserving of the name of tyrant for having sent his hordes to plant the blood-stained banner of despotism upon the walls of Warsaw, amid the ruins of all that was dear to freemen, than was the petty tyrant in any other quarter of the globe, who is equally regardless of the acknowledged rights of man."

Mr. Bolling declared that the advocates of slavery, while "drunk with prejudice," claimed to be sober, and sought to crown all its opponents with opprobrious epithets. He averred that slavery was "a great and appalling evil, a blighting and withering curse upon this land." "Many a brave man," he said, "who would face without shrinking the terrible array of battle, and with a fearless heart spur upon the cannon's mouth, has felt his blood in icy currents flow back upon its source, from the chilling, the fearful thought, that when he should return to the home he had left he should be greeted, not with the smile of joy and of welcome, but by the mangled corpses of his butchered family." He described the desolation that "met and fatigued the eye" in portions of Virginia lying below the mountains, and affirmed that there was no point to which they could turn where the great evil did not stare them in the face ; and that it was a bone of contention between Eastern and Western Virginia, between the slaveholding and non-slaveholding States.

Briefly supporting his amendment, Mr. Randolph maintained that it was the dark, the appalling, and the despairing future that had awakened the public mind, rather than the Southampton insurrection. He asked whether silence would restore the death-like apathy of the negro's mind. It might be wise to let it sleep in its torpor ; but "has not," he asked, "its dark



chaos been illumined ? Does it not move and feel and think ? The hour of the eradication of the evil is advancing, — it must come. Whether it is effected by the energy of our own minds, or by the bloody scenes of Southampton and San Domingo, is a tale for future history.”

Speaking for slavery, Mr. Gholson deprecated discussion, deeming it fraught with incalculable mischief. “We,” he said, “debate it, the press debates it, everybody debates it ; and all this is done as if the slaves around us had neither eyes nor ears.” Maintaining, however, that discussion could now no longer be avoided, he called upon gentlemen who regarded Mr. Randolph’s proposition as “monstrous and unconstitutional” to “meet it publicly, — publicly to discuss it, publicly to expose it, and publicly to reject it.” He thought his constituents would be filled with wonder at the light which illumined the present age, and with mortification at their present ignorance. They really believe, he said, that slaves are property, and that they belong to their masters. This opinion had been impressed upon their minds at quite a tender age ; and in spite of the new lights, they believed that “by the Constitution of the United States and the laws of Virginia slaves were property, which dying men might bequeath, and living men might convey by deeds.” His constituents had always considered that “the owner of land had a reasonable right to its annual profits, the owner of orchards to their annual fruits, the owner of brood mares to their products, and the owner of female slaves to their increase.”

He said that the wretched and misguided fanatic who led the Southampton massacre thought he saw the light of the age, but all his light and all his inspiration were shrouded in the darkness of the grave. He said that northern lights had appeared, and incendiary publications had cast their illuminating rays among them, to conduct the slave to massacre and bloodshed. He thought gentlemen who had drawn gloomy pictures of the poverty and thriftless agriculture of Virginia were better poets than planters, and that there was more happiness and less misery among the slaves of Virginia than among the laboring poor of Europe or the servants of the North. He

thought other Southern States would not applaud the rash and precipitate conduct of Virginia. They were engaged, he said, in a rash and intemperate debate. "With the indiscretion of children we are playing with torches and firebrands, either regardless or forgetful that magazines are under and around us. . . . Should it be the pleasure of this body in an evil hour to connect with its history the adoption of this unjust, partial, tyrannical, and monstrous measure, permit me in the presence of my country to offer a prayer to Heaven, that the recording angel, as he writes it down, may drop a tear upon it and blot it out forever."

Mr. Rives said that he saw no occasion for excitement, and trusted as the debate progressed there would be found nothing to arouse or alarm. He thought the Southampton insurrection had brought nothing new to the minds of the people of Virginia, as it was but an earlier and more melancholy realization of their apprehensions. While he was not filled with apprehensions and alarms, he thought it was the part of wisdom to look ahead, and the duty of public men to scent out and ward off danger, however remote.

Mr. Brodnax addressed the House at great length. He thought the spirit of the age would not tolerate suppression, that slavery was the subject of grave consideration in all parts of the country, and that "the people all over the world are thinking about it, speaking about it, and writing about it." Although he maintained that slavery was "a mildew which has blighted every region it has touched, from the foundation of the world," he made the strange and preposterous affirmation that he was opposed to any system of emancipation which interfered with private property, affected its value, or took a single slave from his master without his consent. Denouncing the moderate plan of emancipation proposed by Mr. Randolph as monstrous in its features and principles, he declared that owners of that kind of property would not and ought not to submit to such a law; that they would hurl from their stations their unfaithful representatives, who had contributed to bring such injustice upon them; and if their successors could effect no repeal, the people would burst into

atoms the bonds that united Virginia in one political community.

"In listening," said Mr. Powell, "to an unrestrained discussion upon a subject on which we are accustomed to breathe our opinions with the lowest whisper, I feel that I am in a dream. But a short time ago the bare utterance of sentiments now listened to with the most profound attention would have been responded to by a simultaneous murmur of disapprobation." He warned the House that when the slaves should have become more enlightened and the love of freedom should have sprung up in their bosoms, that the tragic scenes of Southampton might become a common occurrence, and in those convulsions and struggles their history might be written in characters of blood. Mr. Daniel remarked that it was an age of change and revolution, the fruitful period of conventions and speeches, but he had never expected to see the legislature of Virginia gravely debating the question whether or not the slaves they had inherited from their fathers were property.

Mr. Faulkner, Minister to France at the opening of the rebellion, addressed the House in favor of the gradual extinction of slavery. He said he was no enthusiast, no fanatic; he went for no agrarian laws, no confiscation of property, no wild and chimerical schemes of abolition. But he went for such practical measures, sanctioned by the most illustrious names that adorned the annals of Virginia, as would rescue the State from the appalling catastrophe which in time must befall it.

He referred to the statements made by those opposed to emancipation, calculated to prejudice the public mind. "Our propositions," he said, "have been denounced as monstrous, novel, violent, and extraordinary. We have been represented as sounding a war-cry of insurrection, and as endangering the tranquillity of this State by rash and violent schemes of legislation." He gloried in the privilege of participating in proceedings tending to help forward a revolution so grand and patriotic in its results. "If slavery," he said, "can be eradicated, in God's name let us get rid of it. If it cannot, let that melan-



choly fact be distinctly ascertained, and let those who, we have been told, are now awaiting with painful solicitude the result of your determinations, pack up their household goods and find among the luxuriant forests and prairies of the West that security and repose which their native land does not afford."

He referred to a remark of a sagacious politician on the evening when the first debate sprung up on the presentation of the Quaker petition. "Why do you gentlemen from the West," he asked, "suffer yourselves to be fanned into such a tempest of passion when the subject of slavery is introduced into the House? The time will come, and before long, when there will be no diversity of feeling or interest among us on that point, when we shall all equally represent a slaveholding interest." "It is," said Mr. Faulkner, "to arrest any such possible consequences to my country that I—one of the humblest, but not the least determined, of the Western delegation—have raised my voice for emancipation. Tax our lands, vilify our country, carry the sword of extermination through our now defenceless villages, but spare us, I implore you,—spare us the curse of slavery, that bitterest drop from the chalice of the destroying angel."

"Slavery," he said, "it is admitted, is an evil; it is an institution which presses heavily against the best interests of the State. It banishes free white labor; it exterminates the mechanic, the artisan, the manufacturer. It deprives them of occupation; it converts the energy of a community into indolence, its power into imbecility, its efficiency into weakness. Sir, being thus injurious, have we not a right to demand its extermination? Shall society suffer that the landholder may continue to gather his virgintial crop of human flesh? What is his mere pecuniary claim compared with the great interests of the common weal? Must the country languish, droop, die, that the slaveholder may flourish? Shall all interests be subservient to one, all rights subordinate to slaveholding? Has not the mechanic, have not the middle classes their rights,—rights incompatible with the existence of slavery?"

He expressed his gratification that no gentleman had arisen

in that hall as the avowed advocate of slavery, and declared that the day had gone by when such a voice could be listened to with patience, or even forbearance. He regretted, too, that any had entered the lists of discussion as its apologists, except on the ground of uncontrollable necessity. If there was any one who believed in the harmless character of slavery, he requested him to compare the condition of that commonwealth, barren, desolate, and seared as it were by the avenging hand of Heaven, with the descriptions of the same country by those who first broke its virgin soil. To what is this ascribable? Alone to the withering and blasting effects of slavery. He avowed himself opposed to any plan of emancipation which was not mild, gradual, and prospective in its operation. Delicate and difficult as was the subject, he would still preach it. "Our security," he added, "requires it. In the language of the wise and prophetic Jefferson, you must approach it, you must hear it, you must adopt some plan of emancipation, or worse will follow."

Mr. Marshall proposed such an amendment to the Constitution of the United States as would give the power to Congress to appropriate money to aid the States. He would, by timely precautions, endeavor to "avert that portentous cloud which already blackens the horizon, and which threatens at some future day to pour its fury on our heads." He thought the abolition of slavery was not desirable on account of the condition of the slave; "but it is ruinous to the whites,—retards improvement, roots out an industrious population, banishes the yeomanry of the country, deprives the spinner, the weaver, the smith, the shoemaker, the carpenter, of employment and support. This evil admits of no remedy. It is increasing, and will continue to increase, until the whole State will be inundated with one black wave covering her whole extent, with a few white faces here and there floating on the surface."

Mr. Roane owned slaves, and valued them as highly as Mr. Gholson valued his women and children, which he had asserted were as much his property as his brood mares. He declared that he would never interfere with the just rights of property,

but he was in favor of action, because delay brought danger, and he would not "halt and boggle and falter" while the country was "groaning and travailing and suffocating under the heaviest and blackest curse that ever afflicted freemen."

Mr. Wood was opposed to touching the question of abolition, and he saw nothing in the Southampton insurrection calculated to inspire alarm or create distrust. He said if Virginia had been settled by the Puritans her condition might have been better without slavery, but the early settlers of Virginia were English gentlemen, who came there not to devote themselves to lives of labor and self-denial, but for the purpose of enjoying the luxuries of the table, furnished alike by the forests and the waters. "The people of Virginia," he said, "did not vex themselves with the harassing cares of commerce, nor were they reduced to the necessity of labor. They devoted themselves to social intercourse, to the cultivation of elegant literature and fine oratory. In these they excelled, not only any race in this Union, but perhaps in the world."

These words of the boastful Virginian breathe a spirit and convey a sentiment which were not only common at the South, but more or less admitted and acquiesced in at the North. The chivalry, generosity, refinement, and culture of Southerners were always claimed and often urged as at least some compensation for their servile system, and for their other less worthy qualities. But the facts never justified such pretensions. In literature their authors were few, and at best of inferior rank; while the meagreness of their contributions to science, letters, and the arts has been generally conceded. From their pretensions to superior generosity and refinement the war tore off the mask, and revealed the fact that all such assumptions were shams, or, at best, most glaringly superficial.

Mr. Preston, who had moved to amend the resolution of the committee so that it would declare that it was "expedient" to act, spoke eloquently in support of the position he had assumed. He admitted that for two hundred years the thoughts, words, and acts of Virginia had been suppressed, that their mouths had been closed, and that all investigations in relation to slavery had been stifled. He thanked God that the spell



was broken, that the scales had fallen from their eyes, and that he was at liberty to speak every opinion he entertained. He admitted that no emancipation could take place then, or in the future, without an infringement upon the rights of property, if those rights were, as was assumed, "superior to all law, and above all necessity." He said unhesitatingly that if the slaves were white men he should rejoice in a revolution, as it was their color and difference of race which made such an idea appalling. Referring to the declaration of Mr. Gholson that much of the wealth of Eastern Virginia was in the increase of their slaves, he exclaimed: "In the name of God, has it come to this? Does the wealth and the beauty and the chivalry of Virginia derive its support and owe its existence to the increase of slaves?"

The policy of emancipation was denounced by Mr. Knox, and he declared that it was susceptible of demonstration, that to slavery, as it existed in Virginia, they might "trace the high and elevated character which she has heretofore sustained"; and he expressed the opinion that "its continued existence is indispensably requisite, in order to preserve the forms of a republican government."

Mr. Summers of Western Virginia made a very able speech against slavery west of the Blue Ridge. He thought, if that section of Virginia were a separate and independent State, she would annihilate slavery at a blow. "We do not," he said, "desire that the hardy and independent tenantry of our country should be made to give way to those who have no other rule than to work as little and waste as much as they can, whose only impulse is fear, and whose only interest is to avoid the punishment of their employers. We cannot desire to see our mountains blackened with the slave, or that the fresh grass of our valley should wither beneath his tread." He would not advert to the great principles of eternal justice, that regarded with equal beneficence all persons, without distinction of color or condition; but he wished to better their own condition, "to arrest the desolating scourge of our country, to save from after ages the accumulated ills of a then hopeless and remediless disease." He maintained that men, to remain slaves,

must remain ignorant ; that necessity had placed on the statute-books of Virginia "laws to close every avenue of knowledge to the wretched negro, to extinguish that little spark that glimmers in his bosom, and which ages of degradation have not wholly destroyed." The antiquary in his researches, he feared, would not understand the necessity which justified them "in attempting to annihilate the mind of a portion of our race, and to withdraw from them the knowledge of their own immortality and destiny beyond the grave. The love of liberty could not be eradicated by oppression. It was a scintillation struck from the eternal rock of being, and could be extinguished only in the tomb." He closed with expressing the hope that by emancipation they should save their posterity from the wretched inheritance and calamity of slavery, receive the smile of Heaven and the blessing of their children's children, and that after time would trace the origin of American abolition to that debate.

Mr. Burr denied the sinfulness of slavery ; said that there were more than forty millions of slaves at the beginning of the Christian era, and that Christ saw them in their wretchedness, and, although he came into the world to rebuke sin, he did not condemn slaveholding. He reminded the representatives of Western Virginia that the dark wave of slavery which haunted their imaginations had been rolling for centuries against the mountains, and yet had "only cast a little spray beyond. The foot of the negro delights not in the dew of the mountain grass. He is the child of the sandy desert. The burning sun gives him life and vigor, and his step is most joyous on the arid plains."

Of this system, thus declared not to be "sinful," Mr. Berry said that it was a cancer on the body politic, as certain, steady, and fatal in its progress as any cancer on the physical system. Of the slaves he said that they had as far as possible closed "every avenue by which light might enter their minds," and that they had to go only one step farther "to extinguish the capacity to see the light," to reduce them to the level of the beasts of the field ; and, he added, "I am not certain that we would not do it if we could find out the necessary process, and

that under the plea of necessity." He predicted that the slaves would yet assert their liberty, and that "a death-struggle must come between the two classes, in which one or the other will be extinguished forever." This "death-struggle," of which the eloquent Virginian spoke, was his form of characterizing the "irrepressible conflict." It did come in less than one generation, though not in the form here shadowed forth. In it, however, the slave system, and not one of the contestant classes, went down.

But the most eloquent and effective speech of this great debate was made by James McDowell, afterward governor of the State and a representative in Congress. It was a masterly portrayal of the ruin and demoralization wrought by slavery in his native State. Its wonderful and almost magical effect upon the convention is a matter of tradition in Virginia to this day. In describing the panic and terror wrought by the Southampton insurrection, and in reply to a member who had characterized it as a petty affair, he declared that it drove families from their homes, assembled women and children in crowds, in every condition of weakness and infirmity, and every suffering that want and terror could inflict, to escape the terrible dread of domestic assassination. "Was that," he asked, "a 'petty affair,' which erected a peaceful and confiding portion of the State into a military camp; which *outlawed from pity the unfortunate beings whose brothers had offended*; which barred every door, penetrated every bosom with fear or suspicion; which so banished every sense of security from every man's dwelling, that, let but a hoof or horn break upon the silence of the night, and an aching throb would be driven to the heart? The husband would look to his weapon, and the mother would shudder, and weep upon her cradle! Was it the fear of Nat Turner and his deluded, drunken handful of followers, which produced such effects? Was it this that induced distant counties, where the very name of Southampton was strange, to arm and equip for a struggle? No, sir, it was the *suspicion eternally attached to the slave himself*, — a suspicion that a Nat Turner might be in every family, that the same bloody deed might be acted over at any time and in any place, that the



materials for it were spread through the land, and were always ready for a like explosion."

Not only is there the testimony of the great debate, but the press of the State was equally pronounced in its assertion of the evils and dangers of their system of slavery. The "Richmond Inquirer," the leading paper of the State and of the whole South, said on the 7th of January, 1832: "It is probable, from what we hear, that the committee on the colored population will report some plan for getting rid of the free people of color. But is that all that can be done? Are we to forever suffer the greatest evil that can scourge our land, not only to remain, but to increase in its dimensions? 'We may shut our eyes and avert our faces if we will,' writes an eloquent South-Carolinian, returning from the North a few weeks ago, 'but then it is the dark and growing evil at our doors; and meet the question we must at no distant day. God only knows what it is the part of wise men to do on this momentous and appalling subject. But something ought to be done. Means, sure but gradual, systematic but discreet, ought to be adopted for reducing this mass of evil which is pressing upon the South, and which will press upon her the more heavily the longer it is put off. We ought not to shut our eyes nor avert our faces. And although we speak almost without hope that the committee or the legislature will do anything at the present session to meet the question, yet we say now, in the utmost sincerity of our hearts, that our wisest men cannot give too much of their attention to this subject, nor can they give it too soon.'"

Seldom, if ever, have the evils of slavery been more graphically, not to say terrifically, portrayed, than in this remarkable debate and discussion. These men spoke and wrote of what they knew. They described dangers and difficulties not at a distance, but at home, in which they were involved, and before which they trembled. None can read their words, even at this day, without feelings of sympathy and pity at their helpless and almost hopeless condition. For through the whole debate, even in the remarks of the most earnest and advanced, there was manifested an inability to grapple successfully with a system, not only enshrined in their laws, but inwrought into their whole social life.

This movement, however, though begun under auspices so favorable and betokening success, and though thus ably sustained in the halls of debate and by the press, came to nothing. Looking to ultimate emancipation and expatriation, however remote and gradual, it alarmed the slaveholding aristocracy which had so long ruled Virginia, and which at once took the alarm. Discussion, sternly frowned upon, ceased. Most of the men, prominent in this debate, were either placed under the ban of the Slave Power, or were compelled to placate it by succumbing to its behests, disowning their own words, and becoming the active agents in defending what they once so severely condemned.

Where, it may be asked, in the fiercest invectives, in the most impassioned appeals and warnings, or in the wildest ravings of any class of Abolitionists, can there be found any arraignment of the system of slavery more fearful, any confessions more damaging, or any condemnation more crushing, than can be gathered from the words of this debate, carried on by Southern men on Southern soil? And where can be found more mournful evidence, plentiful as it is, of the terrible power embodied in the slave system, which could convert, as it soon did, such men, with talents and position so commanding, and with such admissions and confessions on their lips, into strenuous advocates and sturdy defenders of what they knew to be so full of guilt and harm to the individual, — of detriment and danger to the State?

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE FORMATION AND PURPOSES OF THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

Its Inconsistencies. — Views of Dr. Hopkins. — Mr. Jefferson's Proposition. — Resolutions of the Virginia Legislature. — Judge Tucker's Plans of Emancipation. — Mercer's Resolutions. — Meetings of the Society. — Its Constitution and Officers. — Its Purpose. — Equivocal Position. — Declarations of Mr. Clay. — Avowals of its Advocates. — Views of the "African Repository." — Black Laws. — Compulsory Colonization. — Action of Maryland Legislature. — Action of the Free People of Color. — Views of the National Conventions of Free Colored Men. — Declaration of Mr. Webster. — Mr. Garrison's Mission to England. — Eliot Cresson. — Protest of the British Abolitionists. — Address of Mr. Garrison. — Hold of the Colonizationists upon the Country. — Their Proscriptive Course. — Encouragement to Mobs.

THE American Colonization Society was organized in the year 1816, in the city of Washington. Auxiliary societies were soon formed in most of the States. This association, with its affiliated organizations, contributed in no small degree to influence the opinions and actions of men, and to intensify the irrepressible conflict of the last half-century. In its original formation and subsequent progress, in its avowals, arguments, and acts, it was always singularly inconsistent and illogical. It manifestly yielded and pandered to the wicked prejudice against race and color; and yet it called upon churches and Christians to assist in sustaining it as an essential part of the missionary enterprise. It cruelly aspersed and defamed the free people of color; and yet insisted that they were the preordained instruments of Heaven for the civilization of Africa. It evinced the most undisguised hostility to Abolition and Abolitionists; and yet it persistently pressed its claims on the friends of the slave. While it embraced many wise and good men, actuated by philanthropic and Christian principles, its history compels the conviction that, unwittingly



or from design, its influence was largely instrumental in producing that sad demoralization of the nation which rendered possible the subsequent aggressions and triumphs of the Slave Power.

How to suppress the slave-trade, how to abolish slavery, and what disposition should be made of free people of color, were questions that early occupied the minds of leading men both North and South. Dr. Hopkins, the ablest champion of the colored race in his day, was in favor of the extinction of the slave-trade; of "averting the Divine judgments," and obtaining "the smile of Heaven" by delivering the country from "the sin and calamity of slavery"; and also of providing for the education of colored children in useful learning, that they might be raised to an acknowledged equality with white people. Deeply concerned for the highest welfare of the colored race, and for the advancement of civilization and Christianity, he conceived and suggested the idea, even before the Revolution, of African colonization. In his address on the slave-trade and the slavery of the Africans before the Providence Antislavery Society, in 1793, he more fully developed the idea of a general movement for colonizing such colored persons in Africa as might be desirous of going thither; in order to "maintain the practice of Christianity in the sight of their now heathen brethren, endeavor to instruct and civilize them, and spread the knowledge of the gospel among them." In an appendix to this powerful address, he expressed his confidence that if a well-digested plan could be laid before the public, it might be carried into effect. He referred with commendation to the previous action of Massachusetts in resolving that, "when a place can be found in Africa where the blacks of that State may settle to their advantage, they would furnish them with shipping and provisions sufficient to transport them there, and arms sufficient to defend them, and farming utensils sufficient to cultivate the land."

During the Revolution Mr. Jefferson proposed to incorporate into the revised code of Virginia a plan for colonizing free persons of color. At that time these were regarded as a "lower caste," and, in the South at least, as "a disturbing

element to the peace of society and dangerous to the interests of slavery." Mr. Jefferson and other more advanced Southern men were in favor of general emancipation with colonization. The idea of colonization, too, was entertained by an entirely different class, — by those who wished to be rid of the presence and example of free negroes, but who were opposed to emancipation. This feeling was greatly stimulated and increased by the discovery, in 1800, of an alleged conspiracy of the negroes, in the country around Richmond, to seize the magazine, the mills, and bridge across the James River, take possession of the city, and issue a proclamation inviting the blacks to rally to their standard. But the scheme failed, and several of the leaders were tried and executed. The feelings and fears, however, excited by it, were manifested at the next meeting of the legislature. The governor was requested to enter into correspondence with the President relative to the purchase of land out of the limits of that State, "where persons obnoxious to the laws and dangerous to the peace of society may be removed." At the following session the project of obtaining lands beyond the limits of the State was distinctly declared to be for the purpose of securing a place to which "free negroes and such as may be emancipated may be sent."

As no action was taken by the general government, the legislature of Virginia, in 1805, instructed members of Congress from that State to secure a cession of territory in the new Louisiana purchase for the purposes of colonization. This action of several successive legislatures of Virginia was taken in secret session, revealing the sense of insecurity that prompted it. As no territory for this purpose had been secured by the efforts of the legislature, a law was enacted in 1806, that slaves thereafter manumitted should leave the State within one year, or be again reduced to slavery. This action of four legislatures clearly revealed the feelings and views that then pervaded that State. The same was indicated by the plan of emancipation proposed by Judge Tucker, one of her most learned and distinguished jurists. In his plan, by which all females born after a fixed period should be free, he

provided that no free black should hold office, possess real estate, keep arms, be a witness against white men, or maintain a suit at law. He gave as a reason for these stern and inhuman provisions, by which the ordinary privileges of freemen would be withheld from them, that he wished "to render it their inclination and their interest to seek those privileges in some other climate."

In 1816 Charles Fenton Mercer introduced a resolution into the legislature, which was nearly unanimously adopted, asking the aid of Congress to procure in Africa, or elsewhere beyond the limits of the United States, a territory "as an asylum for such persons of color as are now free, or may desire the same, and for those who may be hereafter emancipated within this commonwealth." It was afterward stated by Mr. Mercer that his resolution was introduced prior, but with a view, to the formation of a colonization society. It was stated, too, in a published account of the formation of the American Colonization Society, that the meeting for that purpose was called by those who believed the Virginia legislature had entered upon the work with a spirit and determination to prosecute it with vigor, and who also desired to secure the "aid" of the general government. These facts justify the claims vauntingly put forth in the Virginia Colonization Society, in 1836, that "the plan of colonizing the free blacks, and such as might be made free, originated here. The principles of the society were Virginia principles." While, however, it was the action of the Virginia legislature of 1816 which inspired this movement for the purposes avowed, there were many Northern advocates of colonization who were actuated by other and higher motives.

In the autumn of that year a meeting was held in Princeton, New Jersey, under the lead of Rev. Dr. Robert Finley, who took a deep interest in the organization of such a society, and who was long identified with its operations. Indeed, this gentleman seems to have been the active agent in the movement which resulted in its formation. He visited Washington early in December, and was chiefly instrumental in calling the meeting which assembled on the 21st of that month, in that city, to consider the propriety and practicability of colonizing



free people of color, and of forming an association for that purpose. Henry Clay presided, spoke of the condition of the free people of color, and pronounced the cause a noble one, which proposed to "rid our country of a useless and pernicious, if not a dangerous, portion of its population"; and contemplated, strangely enough, with such materials for factors and agents, "the spreading of the arts of civilized life, and the possible redemption from ignorance and barbarism of a benighted quarter of the globe."

John Randolph distinctly declared that this meeting did not in any wise affect the question of negro slavery; but "must materially tend to secure the property of every master in the United States in his slaves." On the 28th another meeting was held, and on the first day of the year 1817 the society was fully organized by the choice of officers. Judge Bushrod Washington, an associate justice of the Supreme Court, a Virginia slaveholder, was chosen president; twelve of its seventeen vice-presidents were from the South, and all, or nearly all, of its twelve managers were slaveholders. The spirit of its first president, if not of the society itself, was soon manifested. Learning, in 1821, that his slaves believed, inasmuch as he was the nephew of Washington, and president of the Colonization Society, that he intended to give them their freedom, he called them together, stated what he had heard, and coolly informed them that he had no such intention. Shortly afterward he verified that cruel and wanton declaration by sending fifty-four of them from the very home of the Father of his Country to the New Orleans slave-market.

The constitution had no preamble setting forth the motive and objects of the organization. Nor was there anything in the instrument itself indicating its purpose, excepting the second article, in which it was stated that its attention was "to be exclusively directed" to colonizing free people of color. This omission of all assigned motives indicated its equivocal and double-faced policy, which ever seemed to be to secure at one and the same time the co-operation of both the friends and foes of the colored race,—of those who aided it because they hoped thus to lessen the evils of slavery, and of those

who hoped that the removal of the free would strengthen the fetters of the bond,— of those who saw in it a providential means of sending the gospel to Africa, and of those who thought of that gospel only to hate and oppose it.

The general position of the American Colonization Society may be seen, too, in the avowed sentiments and feelings of its leading members, advocates, and presses toward the free people of color. Not only were they wanting in expressions of sympathy and words of encouragement and hope, but language highly depreciative, if not defamatory, was employed concerning these victims of an unfeeling ostracism and tyrannous oppression. Mr. Clay declared: "Of all classes of our population, the most vicious is that of the free colored people. Contaminated themselves, they extend their vices to all around them. They are the most corrupt, abandoned, and depraved."

General Mercer, who more than any other public man was the master spirit of the enterprise, styled them "a horde of miserable people, the objects of universal suspicion, subsisting by plunder." A memorial of the Kentucky Colonization Society to Congress thus characterized them: "They are a mildew on our fields, a scourge to our backs, and a stain on our escutcheon." An editorial in the "African Repository," the recognized organ of the society, represented them as "ignorant, degraded, mentally diseased, broken-spirited, and scarcely reached in their debasement by the heavenly light." And again: "They must be forever debased, forever useless, forever a nuisance from which it were a blessing for society to be rid."

This cold-blooded characterization, too, was only equalled by the reiterated assertions, and claim even, that there was no remedy, no help, at least in this country. It was proclaimed that "these prejudices of society" against them were "inevitable and incurable," which "neither refinement, nor argument, nor education, nor religion itself can subdue." They were considered as belonging to an "inferior caste," as occupying a "station" from which "they can never rise, be their talents, their enterprise, their virtues what they may. They

constitute a class by themselves, out of which no individual can be elevated and below which none can be depressed."

To these views of the character of the free people of color and their remediless condition should be added the avowed reasons for seeking their expatriation. The real intent and *animus* of the movement were never in the interest of freedom, or but exceptionally in that of the free people of color. Its real, its avowed aim was to render slavery and its supporters more secure ; or, as Henry A. Wise honestly expressed it, "the great original principle" was "friendship for the slaveholders," which, he said, it must continue to "maintain." The same principle was clearly recognized and avowed by Mr. Webster, in his 7th of March speech, in which, among his other overtures for Southern confidence, he pledged his support to any proposition "or scheme of colonization" the South might see fit to propose, "to relieve themselves from the burden of their free colored population." Though many Northern antislavery men and Christians were lending it their aid, for the promised good to Africa and the Africans, its leading members and supporters were characterizing property in man as "sacred," "as inviolable as any other in the country." They said to the slaveholders: "We know your rights, and we respect them." They claimed Southern support on the ground, as expressed by Randolph at its first meeting, that it "would prove one of the greatest securities" to such property. This idea even the "Repository" expressed, again and again, in different forms and phrases. It declared that removing free people of color "would contribute more effectually to the continuance and strength" of slavery than anything else ; "would augment instead of diminishing the value of the property left behind" ; "would secure slaveholders and the whole Southern country" ; would render the slave who remains in America more obedient, more faithful, more honest, and, consequently, more useful to his master ; and "would provide and keep open a drain for the excess beyond the occasion of profitable employment."

Corroborative of the same influence was the ill-disguised indifference, not to say hostility, of its advocates to any plan for



the improvement and elevation of the very class whose wretched condition they so vividly depicted. While protesting against the manumission of slaves unless coupled with expatriation, calling abolition mere "enthusiasm," an "unsubstantial theory of the rights of man," and abolitionists "fanatics," they expressed their sorrow at the "misguided piety" which sometimes prompted "death-bed" manumissions, and asserted that "it would be as humane to throw slaves from the decks in the middle passage as to set them free in this country." Not only had they no plans for the amelioration of the free people of color themselves, but they heartlessly pronounced against any which might be proposed by others. Thus the society, in an elaborate address to the public, authoritatively defined its position: "The moral, intellectual, and political improvement of free people of color within the United States are objects foreign to the powers of the society."

Dr. Leonard Bacon, a distinguished clergyman of New Haven, an officer of the society, thus gave his views concerning its mission: "It is not a missionary society, nor a society for the suppression of the slave-trade, nor a society for the improvement of the blacks, nor a society for the abolition of slavery; it is simply a society for the establishment of a colony on the coast of Africa." And these are but samples of the general tone and tenor of its writers and speakers, of the documents and addresses that once abounded for its advocacy and defence.

Among them the religious press was largely represented. Thus a Southern paper declares: "If free people of color were generally taught to read, it might be an inducement for them to remain in this country. We would offer them no such inducements." Nor were the Northern journals without sentiments equally unfeeling. The New Haven "Religious Intelligencer" condemned any measures calculated to bind the colored population to this country by "seeking to raise them to a level with the whites, whether by founding colleges or in any other way," because it would "divert attention and counteract and thwart the whole plan of colonization."

Among the many short-comings of the Colonization Society

was its admitted failure to secure the confidence of the colored people. Though it was ostensibly formed in their interest, and was really incapable of accomplishing the objects of its organization without their voluntary co-operation and willing acceptance of its assistance, it was never regarded with favor by them. On the contrary, they always distrusted its pretensions and dreaded its influence. Nor was it strange. For the more intelligent could not have been unacquainted with something of its history, and with the open and cruel avowals of its founders and early advocates ; and all may have known that the same men who were its members and defenders not only oppressed their slaves, but demanded and indorsed those most cruel laws against free colored people which not only disgraced the statute-books of all slaveholding States, but sadly disfigured Northern legislation.

The extreme aversion of slaveholders to the presence of free people of color, and their desire to be rid of them, aided by the general prejudice against color, provoked a vast amount of hostile and wicked legislation, both North and South. The "black laws" of many of the free States were second in disgraceful cruelty and injustice only to the more summary and sanguinary slave-codes of the South itself. The admitted intent of such legislation in both sections was to compel, in reality if not in form, these unfortunate ones to leave their country, where their comfort, success, and security were persistently and systematically disregarded, while they were made the objects of provoking and painful social and legal oppressions.

This identity of interest and purpose, and at the South of constituency even, between the party of slavery and the party of colonization, not only prevented on the part of the latter all sympathy with the victims of these laws, but also all discountenance of the policy that demanded their enactment and enforcement. In point of fact, the Colonization Society seemed rather to welcome such legislation as a means of furthering its purposes and making the colored people willing to accept its proffered aid. Thus a writer in the "African Repository" exclaims : "How important that we hasten to clear our land of

our black population ! What right, I demand, have the children of Africa to a home in a white man's country ? Let Africans rise to empire ; but let it be under the shade of their native palms. Let the Atlantic billow heave its high and everlasting barrier between their country and ours." Even the Massachusetts Colonization Society could speak almost approvingly of the fact that "the colored man's prospects of a happy home here are continually growing darker. The unwillingness to have a large free colored population is steadily increasing in all the States exposed to it"; and it adds, "such discouragements force them to think of Liberia."

In 1831 Maryland, in order that the State might be protected from the alleged "evils" growing out of the "connection" of her increasing free colored population with the slaves, enacted some very stringent and barbarous laws,—one forbidding manumission unless the slaves were sent away,—and it appropriated two hundred thousand dollars to be expended by the Colonization Society of that State. At the next annual meeting of the parent society a resolution was passed expressing the "highest gratification" at the continued efforts of Maryland,—embracing, of course, those barbarous laws in regard to her free colored population. "We do not ask," said a memorial of the New York Colonization Society to the legislature, in language it is hardly credible civilized and Christian men could have used, "that the provisions of our constitution and statute-book should be so modified as to relieve and exalt the condition of the colored people whilst they remain with us. Let those provisions stand IN ALL THEIR RIGOR, to work out the ultimate and unbounded good of these people."

A society with such an origin and object, constituency and avowals, could not escape the notice and criticism of the free colored people themselves. They seemed instinctively to divine its purpose and distrust its aims ; for, as early as 1817, they held a meeting in the city of Richmond to express their opposition to the scheme. In the same year a similar meeting was held in Philadelphia, in which they denounced as "cruel" "any measure or system of measures having a tendency to



banish" them; expressed their deep abhorrence at the stigma cast upon them as "a dangerous and useless part of the community"; declared that they would never voluntarily separate themselves from the slave population of the country; that, "without arts, without science, or a proper knowledge of government, to cast into the savage wilds of Africa the free people of color seems to us the circuitous route by which they must return to perpetual bondage." Similar meetings were held by the free people of color in Washington, Baltimore, and in all the Northern cities and States.

A national convention of colored men was held in Philadelphia in 1831. That convention embodied and expressed the sentiments of the free people of color. To the Colonization Society it thus addressed itself: It would "respectfully suggest to that august body of talent, learning, and worth that, in our humble opinion, strengthened, too, by the opinions of eminent men in this country as well as in Europe, they are pursuing the direct road to perpetuate slavery, with all its unchristian concomitants, in this boasted land of freedom; and, as citizens and men whose best blood is sapped to gain popularity for that institution, we would in the most feeling manner beg of them to desist; or, if we must be sacrificed to their philanthropy, we would rather die at home. Many of our fathers and some of us have fought and bled for the liberty, independence, and peace which you now enjoy; and surely it would be ungenerous and unfeeling in you to deny us a humble and quiet grave in that country which gave us birth." This tender and touching appeal was the voice of a quarter of a million of oppressed and suffering men and women, who, though nominally free, were compelled to bear many of the burdens of that terrible system which then held more than two millions of their race in chains. The next year they met again in convention, and again appealed to the colonizationists "to cease their unhallowed persecutions." They declared that it was unnecessary to repeat their "protest against that institution." "Our views and sentiments," they said, "have long since gone to the world, — the wings of the wind have borne our disapprobation to

that institution. Time itself cannot erase it. We have dated our opposition from its beginning ; and our views are strengthened by time and circumstances, and they hold the uppermost seat in our affections."

The free colored people have ever firmly and persistently continued to avow their opposition to the society, and to enter their solemn protest against its policy. An association, so curiously conglomerate, could not continue harmonious. Men with such conflicting sentiments could not long see in the same agency a legitimate means of promoting purposes so antagonistic. Though it had a Northern face and words for freedom, and numbered among its advocates such men as the Tappans and Gerrit Smith, yet its Southern proclivities and purposes were so much more prominent and pronounced, that men whose philanthropy was something more than a name, one after another, detected the deception and disavowed it. Even Mr. Webster, as early as 1825, retired from a meeting held in Boston to organize an auxiliary society, of which he was chairman, — Lewis Tappan, its secretary, being authority for the statement, — with the remark : " Gentlemen, I will have nothing more to do with the matter ; for I am satisfied it is merely a plan of the slaveholders to get rid of the free negroes."

The opposition of the free negroes, the manifest futility of a scheme to effect emancipation, which had sent out in the first dozen years of its history only a single thousand colonists, and the avowals of its Southern advocates and presses, naturally excited the suspicions of the pious and philanthropic, who had early and gladly welcomed it as an agency of promised good, and led them to examine and finally discard its pretensions.

Previous to 1828, Arthur Tappan, an eminent merchant of the city of New York, had generously contributed to its funds. But he was led to distrust its efficacy as an instrumentality of Christian benevolence, because blacks were sent out without any reference to their moral fitness to become pioneers in civilizing Africa ; because slaves were liberated on the express condition that they should go to Liberia, thus forcing a consent

that should have been free ; and because a part of the cargoes of the vessels sent were New England rum, powder, and arms. As late, too, as the 4th of July, 1829, William Lloyd Garrison delivered an address in Boston, before the Massachusetts Colonization Society, in which, however, he dwelt with much force on the woes and wrongs of the slave. In the autumn of that year he became associated with Benjamin Lundy in the publication of the "Genius of Universal Emancipation," in Baltimore. While in that city he saw more clearly the workings of the colonization scheme, and came to the conclusion that, if it were not the intention of its originators, it had nevertheless become its practical result, "to rivet still closer the fetters of the slaves and deepen the prejudices against the free people of color," and he became an advocate of the doctrine of immediate emancipation. Returning to the North, he became its champion, and the uncompromising opponent of the Colonization Society. He and others found it difficult, however, to awaken in the minds of the people the same distrust which had taken such full possession of their own. But through their agency the public mind was largely disabused of the idea that it was an antislavery instrumentality, or that it tended, in any degree, to the elevation of the free people of color.

The agents of the Colonization Society had visited England, and appealed for support to the British people. The Abolitionists of that country had generally received, welcomed, and accepted their statements. Eliot Cresson went there in 1830, and for more than three years pressed its claims upon the veteran Abolitionists, who were then engaged in the great work of West India emancipation. After the organization of the New England Antislavery Society, and several of its auxiliaries, it was deemed important to disabuse the British mind of some of these unfounded impressions ; and Mr. Garrison was deputed to visit England in the spring of 1833 for that purpose. But he went, in the words of Samuel J. May, his early friend and coadjutor, "with the execrations of the leading colonizationists and all the proslavery partisans on his head."

— Cordially welcomed, and burning with the zeal of profound



convictions, he was anxious to grapple without delay with the advocates of colonization. He at once challenged Mr. Cresson to meet him for public discussion. That champion, however, whose course Mr. Garrison afterward characterized as "marked with cunning, duplicity, and cowardice," prudently declined the challenge. Mr. Garrison delivered several addresses, in which he exposed the character of the society and of its claims to antislavery support, in either England or America. Having faithfully pointed out to the leading Abolitionists the purposes and tendencies of the society, he received, a few days before his return, a protest, addressed to the British public, signed by Wilberforce, Macaulay, Stephen, Lushington, Buxton, Cropper, O'Connell, and other distinguished antislavery men. While acknowledging the colony of Liberia "to be in itself a good thing," they utterly repudiated the principles of the society, declared it to be an obstacle to the "destruction of slavery throughout the world," and pronounced "its pretexts to be delusion," and its "real effects dangerous." These eminent men averred that the society took "its root from a cruel prejudice and alienation in the whites of America against the colored people, slave or free"; that "it fosters and increases a spirit of caste"; "widens the breach between the two races"; "exposes the colored people to great practical persecutions"; and "is calculated to swallow up and divert that feeling which America, as a Christian and free country, cannot but entertain, that slavery is alike incompatible with the law of God and the well-being of man."

In sending this important document to the press, the leading signature to which had been given by the illustrious Wilberforce a few days before his death — one of the closing acts of his eventful life, — Mr. Garrison said: "This protest will hang a millstone about the neck of the American Colonization Society sufficiently weighty to drown it in an ocean of public indignation." Nor did he miscalculate. Though a colonization society was organized in England, it existed only in name and exerted but little influence. This testimony, too, of those distinguished philanthropists, as cheering to the Abolitionists as it was exasperating to the Colonizationists, became a power-

ful agency in dispelling the illusion which the latter had cast over the Northern mind. Having aided in accomplishing this purpose, — by which, perhaps, he rendered as great and essential a service to the antislavery cause as by any act of his life, — he returned to the United States, and issued an address to the friends of the slave, in which he said : “ The great object of my mission — namely, the exposure of the real character and objects of the American Colonization Society — has been accomplished expeditiously, comprehensively, and effectually.”

Imbittered by the success which had crowned the mission of Mr. Garrison in England, and by its arraignment and abandonment by many of its former supporters, the friends of the Colonization Society more fiercely than ever denounced the doctrine of immediate emancipation and its advocates. Though many good men, distinguished for their philanthropy and piety, were continually withdrawing from its support and giving their adhesion to the doctrine of immediate emancipation, the society was still strongly intrenched in the confidence and sympathy of the influential classes. Many of the public men, like Mr. Clay, were earnest and eloquent in its defence. Leaders, too, in the churches and institutions of learning were active in its advocacy and support. Occupying positions of commanding influence, they were indignant at the bold and uncompromising annunciation of unpalatable truths, and strove to put under the ban of social and ecclesiastical proscription the humble and devoted men who were placing the antislavery cause on the enduring basis of the rights of human nature and the laws of God. This intolerant and proscriptive action intensified the public feeling, increased the popular excitement, and inspired many of the lawless deeds of that day, which brought such reproach upon free institutions and dishonor upon the country. Prominent men in both church and state consented to these demonstrations of popular violence. At least, if they did not encourage and prompt them, they did not rebuke and oppose them.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### NEW ENGLAND AND NEW YORK CITY ANTISLAVERY SOCIETIES.

Conference at the Office of Samuel E. Sewall. — Adjourned Meeting. — Adoption of the Preamble and Constitution of the New England Antislavery Society. — Officers of the Society. — Principles enumerated. — Address to the People. — First Annual Meeting. — Resolutions. — First Annual Report. — Mr. Garrison's Resolution in Favor of a National Convention. — "Emancipator." — Great Excitement. — Public Meeting. — Organization of the New York City Antislavery Society. — Arthur Tappan. — Lewis Tappan. — William Goodell. — Joshua Leavitt. — Colonizationists. — Denunciation of the Abolitionists. — Rapid Increase of the Abolitionists. — Publications of John G. Whittier, Lydia Maria Child, Amos A. Phelps.

WHILE the doctrine of immediate emancipation, proclaimed with so much earnestness and boldness by "The Liberator," startled and incensed the many, it was welcomed and gladly accepted by a few. Adopting such sentiments, the latter naturally looked to association and co-operative action. Accordingly, on the 13th of November, 1831, fifteen persons met at the office of Samuel E. Sewall, then a rising young lawyer of Boston, to consider the expediency of forming an antislavery society. It was the understanding that, if twelve persons were found who would agree on the basis of immediate emancipation, such a society should be formed. As only nine of that number would thus agree no action was taken.

On the 16th of December another conference was held at Mr. Sewall's office. There were present Samuel E. Sewall, Ellis Gray Loring, David Lee Child, lawyers of that city; William Lloyd Garrison, editor, and Isaac Knapp, publisher, of "The Liberator"; Oliver Johnson, Robert B. Hall, Isaac Child, John Cutts Smith, and Joshua Coffin. Mr. Child, Mr. Sewall, Mr. Garrison, Mr. Loring, and Mr. Johnson were appointed a committee to prepare a constitution. The meeting was then



adjourned till the first day of January, 1832, at which time there was an additional attendance of Alonzo Lewis, known as the Lynn Bard, William J. Snelling, Dr. Abner Phelps, Rev. Elijah Blanchard, and Dr. Gamaliel Bradford. The committee reported a preamble and constitution. After discussion, the constitution was adopted, and the preamble referred to another committee, to report at an adjourned meeting, to be held on the 6th, in the school-room under the African Baptist Church, in Belknap Street.

At that meeting the preamble, which was written by Mr. Snelling, was reported; and, after discussion and amendment, was adopted. The constitution was then signed by William Lloyd Garrison, Oliver Johnson, Robert B. Hall, Arnold Buffum, William J. Snelling, John E. Fuller, Moses Thacher, Joshua Coffin, Stillman B. Newcomb, Benjamin C. Bacon, Isaac Knapp, and Henry K. Stockton. There were in the conferences which preceded the formation of the society differences of opinion in regard to its name, principles, and policy. David Lee Child, Samuel E. Sewall, and Ellis Gray Loring, members of the committee to prepare the preamble and constitution, at first declined to identify themselves with the movement, as they did not fully concur in the expediency of putting forth at that time and in that form all the sentiments contained in the preamble. But after a brief period they became members of the society, and gave to the antislavery cause the earnest and life-long devotion of their large abilities and influence. Among the earliest to join the new society was the venerable John Kenrick, of Newton, who had been for many years an earnest and active Abolitionist. He was subsequently made president, and in his will left the society the first legacy it received. Several colored men soon became members, but at that early period no women joined its ranks.

Its officers consisted of a president, two vice-presidents, a corresponding secretary, a recording secretary, treasurer, and a board of counsellors consisting of six members. Arnold Buffum, a member of the Society of Friends, was made president. His father was a member of the old Abolition Society

of Rhode Island, and he was nurtured in the faith of immediate emancipation. Seven years before, he had visited England and made the acquaintance of Thomas Clarkson and other eminent antislavery men and women of that kingdom. He brought to its service faith, earnestness, and devotion. William Lloyd Garrison, whose name is more prominently identified with modern antislavery than that of any other individual, was made corresponding secretary. On the board of counsellors were Moses Thacher, Oliver Johnson, and Robert B. Hall. Mr. Thacher was a clergyman, and somewhat distinguished for his earnest advocacy of the theology of Dr. Emons, and also for his hostility to the institution of Free Masonry. He was the author of the first address put forth by the society, and continued till the close of the struggle an effective laborer in the cause of emancipation. Mr. Johnson was a young man, intending to enter the ministry. He, however, early identified himself with the antislavery cause, and became a practical and efficient worker, sometimes as a lecturer, but more generally as an editor. When the society was organized, he was the conductor of "The Christian Soldier," which he made at once a champion of the cause. During Mr. Garrison's visit to England, in 1833, he had charge of "The Liberator," and was at times assistant editor. Afterward he was connected for several years with the "New York Tribune," and subsequently, at successive periods, editor of the "Antislavery Bugle," the "Pennsylvania Freeman," and the "Antislavery Standard," each of them a radical antislavery journal. He labored in these different fields with tireless persistency for the emancipation and enfranchisement of the negro race. Mr. Hall entered upon the work with much activity, but his subsequent career hardly came up to his early promise. He became a clergyman of the Episcopal Church, and from that or some other cause he lost something of his early zeal; though as a member of the XXXIVth and XXXVth Congresses his votes were steadily on the side of freedom.

In the preamble the declaration was made that every person of full age and sane mind had a right to immediate freedom from personal bondage; that man could not, consistently with

reason, religion, and the eternal and immutable principles of justice, be the property of man; that whoever retained his fellow-man in bondage was guilty of a grievous wrong; that difference of complexion was no reason why man should be deprived of his natural rights, or subjected to any political disability. "While we advance these opinions," so read the preamble, "as principles on which we intend to act, we declare that we will not operate on the existing relations of society by other than peaceful and lawful means, and that we will give no countenance to violence or insurrection." Its second article declared "that the objects of the society shall be to endeavor, by all means sanctioned by law, humanity, and religion, to effect the abolition of slavery in the United States, to improve the character and condition of free people of color, to inform and correct public opinion in relation to their situation and rights, and to obtain for them equal political rights and privileges with the whites."

The New England Antislavery Society, beginning its career with the promulgation of the doctrine that immediate emancipation was the duty of the master and the right of the slave, held its first public meeting in Essex Street Church, in Boston, on the 29th of January, when a very able address was delivered by the Rev. Moses Thacher, then editor of the Boston "Telegraph," a Hopkinsian journal of that city. Other public addresses were made. Arnold Buffum and Oliver Johnson were appointed agents, and subsequently did much to arouse public attention by their labors. Eminent philanthropists, in the United States and England, were early chosen honorary members, and the society entered at once upon its work. It issued an address to the people, and voted that, with a copy of the constitution, it be sent to all the editors and clergymen of New England. This address from the pen of Mr. Thacher, chairman of the board of counsellors, was very significant of the spirit and purpose of the Abolitionists at that time, affirming that instead of violent they counselled only moral means. He declared the object of the society to be "neither war nor sedition"; that the only influence it could exert must be that of "moral suasion," not "coercion"; that "in the truth and



the God of truth alone we trust for the success of our exertions ; and with the truth and in the name of the God of truth we plead for the cause of humanity." The address asserted that the "fundamental principle upon which our constitution is based is our Saviour's Golden Rule : '*All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*' Hence the grand articles in our creed, that 'God hath made of *one blood* all the nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth'; 'that all men are created equal'; that 'they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.'"

The address also declared that the whole American people ought to be an antislavery society ; that the spirit of civil and religious liberty, the Declaration of Independence, the spirit and letter of the Constitution, required it ; and that the spirit of the gospel of Christ and the voice of public, commutative, and retributive justice imperiously demanded it. The duty of immediate emancipation was unqualifiedly asserted and maintained. "We believe," said the address, "that slavery is an evil *now* ; and, of course, the slaves ought to be *now* emancipated. If the thief is found in possession of stolen property, he is required *immediately* to relinquish it. The slaveholder and the man-stealer are in unlawful possession of the stolen sons and daughters of Africa ; they ought, therefore, immediately to set them free. Every principle which proves slavery unjust, an evil, and a curse, equally demonstrates the duty of immediate emancipation."

The number of slaves was then estimated to be two and a quarter millions. Without impugning the motives of persons who had, from feelings of the purest benevolence, advocated the policy of colonization, that scheme was declared to be radically wrong, tending to involve the country in remediless evils. It was contrary to justice, humanity, philanthropy, and the letter and the spirit of the Golden Rule. The right of the emancipated black man to reside in the United States was an inheritance earned by the sweat of his brow. It was affirmed that colored men had the right of protection in their native land,

and a right to the constitutional franchises of free citizens. The nation was earnestly called upon to be just, to avert the scenes of San Domingo. There was declared to be but one alternative: "The master must manumit his slave, or the slave will manumit himself. We have no doubt that the God of Heaven, who is a God of justice, is at this moment, in his Word and providence, setting before the Southern planter this very alternative; and this alternative embraces life and death, a blessing and a curse. To choose the first, and say to the slave, BE FREE, is to shut the floodgates of human war and of human blood. To choose the latter, and hold the colored man in vassalage, must ere long break up the fountains of the great deep, and have a direct tendency to unsheathe the sword of vengeance, revolution, carnage, and death."

This address, so earnest, temperate, and firm, appealing not to passion or prejudice, but to conscience and reason, invited the co-operation of every philanthropist and Christian to "show himself a friend to his country and a friend to the black man." Based upon such principles, guided by such maxims, holding such articles of faith, and inspired by a spirit thus pure, humane, and just, the New England Antislavery Society made its appeal and entered upon the work of immediate emancipation. It is a sad commentary on the philanthropy, patriotism, and piety of those days that an association avowing such principles and proposing such measures should have encountered so fierce a storm of obloquy and reproach, and been so long and so persistently opposed by the leading influences in church and state. That simple historical fact utters a language of sterner condemnation than pages of invective and indignant characterization. Still, amid all this opposition, many responded to the appeal, and the members rapidly increased.

On the 9th of January, 1833, its first annual meeting was holden in Boston. At this meeting Samuel E. Sewall introduced a resolution in favor of the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia, and earnestly exhorted the society to exert itself to put an end to that atrocious system tolerated at the seat of government. David Lee Child submitted a resolution declaring that free people of color and

slaves had less liberty and were less protected by law in the United States than in any part of the world. In support of his resolution, Mr. Child demonstrated, in an elaborate and exhaustive speech and by references to the CIVIL LAW, that the slaves were far better protected in their rights in the French, Spanish, and Portuguese colonies than in the United States. Amasa Walker, then a merchant of Boston, submitted and ably supported a resolution proclaiming the objects of the New England Antislavery Society to be in strict accordance with the plainest principles of religion, philanthropy, and patriotism.

An elaborate report of the board of managers was read by Mr. Garrison. It fully explained the objects and vindicated the principles of the society. It pronounced immediate abolition a necessity. It sharply criticised the Colonization Society, because "it neither calls for any change of conduct toward people of color on the part of the nation, nor has in itself any principle of reform." It asserted that immediate abolition would remove the cause of bloodshed and insurrection; give protection to millions who are now at the mercy of irresponsible masters and drivers; annihilate a system of licentiousness, incest, blood, and cruelty; open an immense market to mechanics and manufacturers, and afford facilities for educating the slaves in morals, science, and literature; extinguish the fires of division between the North and the South, and make the bonds of union stronger than chains of iron; permit every slave to be supplied with a Bible, and place a hundred thousand infants annually born of slave parents in primary and sabbath schools. It conjured Abolitionists to maintain their ground firmly and confidently. It closed by proclaiming that the blood of millions who have perished unredressed in this guilty land, the sufferings and lamentations of the millions who yet remain in cruel servitude, the groans and supplications of bleeding Africa, the cries of the suffering victims in the holds of slave-ships now wafted on the ocean, and the threatenings and the judgments of the God of all flesh, all demand the utter and immediate annihilation of slavery. At this annual meeting John Kenrick of Newton was chosen president,



Samuel E. Sewall and Oliver Johnson were made corresponding and recording secretaries. On motion of Mr. Garrison, the board of managers were authorized to call a meeting of the friends of abolition, for the purpose of forming a national anti-slavery society, as being "essential to the complete regeneration of public sentiment on the subject of slavery and to the speedy overthrow of that iniquitous system."

Organized on the basis of the common rights of human nature and the laws of God, the New England Antislavery Society had proclaimed that the sin of slavery and the duty of repentance belonged to that generation. Its outspoken, clear, and distinct enunciation of the sin of oppression and the duty of immediate repentance had, during the first year of its existence, been welcomed with enthusiasm by thousands. During no previous year in the history of the country had the questions pertaining to the existence of slavery been so lifted up to the domain of reason and conscience. Never had the cause of the slave been so uncompromisingly held before the American people.

The organization of the New England Antislavery Society and its appeal to the conscience and reason of the country evoked responses in several of the free States. Antislavery societies were organized; and many earnest, humane, and just men and women entered upon the work of emancipation. Nearly all who engaged in the formation of such societies were members of Christian churches, and were taking, at the same time, an active part in the religious, missionary, and philanthropic enterprises of that day. Indeed, during the first five years of the antislavery agitation, its promoters, regarding the effort as their religious work, looked with hope and confident expectation to the churches and benevolent organizations for hearty sympathy and co-operation. Unlike the great contest on the Missouri Compromise, which had a few years before so profoundly stirred the country, this was moral rather than political. Consequently, they who became members of these associations were accustomed to consider the questions at issue in their moral rather than in their civil bearings, and

to look for aid to Christians, churches, and benevolent organizations, rather than to politicians, parties, and legislative bodies. Unaccustomed to public affairs and sharing in the general distrust of party politics, they seldom sought help from political action, and usually failed when they did.

Although the churches generally failed to respond promptly to these Christian appeals for immediate action on behalf of the oppressed, the Abolitionists, though disappointed, were not disheartened. The work went on. Many antislavery societies were formed. Several antislavery newspapers were established, and a general system of antislavery agitation, having been inaugurated, was continued. Among the papers established was the "Emancipator," commenced in New York in March, 1833, by the pecuniary aid of Arthur Tappan, and edited by Rev. Charles W. Denison. The establishment of that journal in the commercial metropolis, in which the principles and policy of the friends of emancipation were clearly and boldly set forth, together with other influences, caused much excitement and aroused feelings of resentment and hostility. This was signally manifested by the proceedings on the evening of the 2d of October, 1833, and subsequently. The friends of immediate abolition were summoned by the call of a committee, of which Joshua Leavitt was chairman, to meet at Clinton Hall to form a New York City Antislavery Society. On the afternoon of that day large placards were posted in the streets, calling upon all persons from the South and all persons disposed to manifest the true feelings of the State to meet at the same time and place. A hostile demonstration was of course anticipated.

The trustees of Clinton Hall refusing to fulfil their contract, and an unsuccessful application having been made for other rooms, a few antislavery men met in the street near the City Hall, and consulted upon the possibility of holding the proposed meeting. At the suggestion of Lewis Tappan, a trustee of Chatham Street Chapel, it was determined to hold the meeting in the lecture-room of that building. At the hour of meeting, about fifty determined Abolitionists, who had been personally notified, assembled. Arthur and Lewis Tappan passed

unrecognized through an immense concourse of men assembled in front of Tammany Hall, preparatory to the premeditated attack upon the proposed meeting. The sexton of the church, locking the iron gates in front of the building, placed the keys in the hands of Lewis Tappan, who informed the meeting that it would probably be assaulted, and that soon ; and that they should promptly despatch the business for which they were assembled.

John Rankin, a merchant of that city and a devoted Abolitionist, was made chairman. Amid those threatening demonstrations the blessing of God was invoked. A committee, appointed at a previous meeting, reported a constitution, which was quickly adopted. Arthur Tappan was chosen president ; Elizur Wright, Jr., and Charles W. Denison were chosen corresponding and recording secretaries. The board of managers consisted of Joshua Leavitt, Isaac T. Hopper, Abraham L. Cox, Lewis Tappan, and William Goodell. The meeting was adjourned, the keys were delivered to the sexton, and the members retired through the main audience room of the chapel into a rear street. They were followed by a man having a light in one hand and a dagger in the other. He was, however, discovered by the sexton, his light extinguished, and he was left to grope his way in the darkness as he best could. Mr. Hopper, a sturdy Quaker, whose life had been consecrated to works of beneficence and the cause of the oppressed, refused to retire, and boldly faced the mob, as with shouts and threats they rushed into the chapel. In their disappointment they seized a negro, called him Arthur Tappan, placed him in the chair, and forced him to make a speech ; which he did very creditably to himself, though not very satisfactorily to his auditors. He said : " Gentlemen, I am not used to making speeches, and don't pretend to be qualified to do so. But one or two things I do know : one is, God hath made of one blood all nations ; and another is, all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Now — " " That will do," exclaimed his impatient hearers.

Joshua Leavitt and Lewis Tappan devoted the night to pre-



paring an account of the proceedings, and furnishing copies for the city press, whose readers the next morning were not a little surprised to find in the same journals both the statement that "the agitators had been put down," and an authorized report of the doings of the meeting and the organization of the society. This society soon issued an address to the people of the city in explanation and defence of immediate emancipation, and the principles and policy it proposed in its attempts to secure it by the American people. Nor were their doctrines and policy all that were calculated to attract attention; the *personnel* of the new organization was not unworthy of its noble sentiments and benignant purposes. Arthur Tappan, its president, was a native of Massachusetts. He early became a distinguished and successful merchant of New York. An earnest Christian and philanthropist, his name was associated with nearly every missionary and reformatory enterprise of his day. Modest, quiet, and unassuming, without much facility in the use of tongue or pen, his life will be remembered rather as one of deeds than words. Surrounded by ledgers and invoices, clerks and customers, his ear and hand were alike open to the appeals for personal charity, the claims of an oppressed race or of a ruined world. Munificent as unostentatious in his gifts, his range of benevolence was wide and catholic. His brother, Lewis Tappan, though unlike him in many particulars, was no less earnest and devoted to the cause of reform and Christian benevolence. Like his brother, with whom he was so long associated in trade and beneficence, he was a man of remarkable business capacity, great courage, and a large-hearted philanthropy. Unlike him, he spoke and wrote with fluency, pungency, and vigor. Of the many enterprises with which he has been connected his rare versatility and energy have made him the life and soul. "He would," says a fellow-laborer, "oversee their immense mercantile business, go on 'Change, write two editorials, attend a meeting of the American Antislavery Society's executive committee, step into the noon prayer-meeting and pray, or deliver an exhortation, and wind up by sitting in the church session, and addressing a temperance meeting composed of ne-

groes in the evening, all in the same day ; all the time would be in a hurry, but never flurried, and would seem perfectly at home in each of these vocations." He infused much of his own energy and system into the new society, besides contributing largely to its funds.

Another member of that meeting and board was William Goodell, a lifelong friend of the Tappans and of the slave. Among the earliest in the field, fond of abstract reasoning, speculation, and fundamental principles, he was, perhaps, too prone to adopt extreme opinions and impracticable theories. Though apt to be diffuse and prolix, he often condensed his thoughts and gave them most clear, terse, and forcible expression. - Eminently conscientious and of undaunted courage and untiring industry, he rendered invaluable service to an unpopular but righteous cause in the days of its feebleness. For half a century he developed and brought to light by his indefatigable labors a mass of facts and reasonings on the subject, which have afforded rich materials for the more effective use by other men of more popular tact and talent. His "History of Slavery and Antislavery" is a magazine from which the speakers and writers of a generation drew their weapons of attack and defence in the great conflict.

Another of the veterans who was present at that meeting was Joshua Leavitt, a man of varied intelligence and of acknowledged ability, logical in his mode of thought, clear and forcible in his style of expression. From his long connection with the press and frequent residence in Washington, where he was on terms of intimacy with Adams, Giddings, Slade, and other men of similar character, his information upon the political relations and bearings of slavery came to be comprehensive, varied, and minute, and therefore of great practical service to the antislavery cause. He was a fertile and voluminous writer, and by his editorials, tracts, and other papers, did much to enlighten the people and prepare them for political action. A strong free-trader, his sympathies were more with the Democratic party than with the Whigs, whom he manifestly disliked, and by whom his dislike was cordially reciprocated.

Such was the origin, material, and purpose of the New York

society. It was able in men and means, and did much in those early days to bring and keep before the public eye the great truths of human fraternity and man's political rights. And yet, though it embraced so much of intellectual and moral worth, with sentiments so humane and Christian, and purposes so carefully and guardedly enunciated, it was at once denounced by mob and press, by truckling partisanship and religious conservatism. The Colonizationists, deeming this organization and its doctrines antagonistic to their own, joined in the general denunciation. At a meeting held a few days after its organization, immediate emancipation was bitterly denounced and Abolitionists sternly rebuked. Chancellor Walworth, whose name was for many years associated with religious and benevolent organizations, flippantly styled such generous, humane and Christian men as had founded the new society "visionary enthusiasts" and "reckless demagogues." David B. Ogden, one of the leaders of the New York bar, branded them as "fanatics," and declared their doctrines "opposed to the Constitution," and their organization "the poetry of philanthropy." Even Theodore Frelinghuysen, eminent among the men of his age for the purity of his public and private character, and for his zeal and activity in the cause of religion and benevolence, characterized the antislavery movement as "the very wildness of fanaticism." Such language from such men, in the then feverish condition of the public mind, clearly tended to deepen the prejudices of those who had confidence in their integrity, piety, and wisdom, and to arouse the brutal passions of the rough and reckless.

How much such language, uttered at that time, contributed to arouse the spirit of violence which was so fearfully developed in that city during the next year will never be known. If such men could so violate the sanctities of Christian character and confidence, was it strange that the mob should invade the sanctities, no more sacred, of private dwellings and the house of God? In the light of to-day, was it less censurable in Chancellors Walworth and Frelinghuysen thus to arraign the public character and conduct of such men, and that in regard to purposes and plans so pure and benign, than for the un-



named and lawless ruffianism of New York to rifle the houses of Lewis Tappan and Dr. Cox, or break into and disperse the meeting at Chatham Street Chapel?

Notwithstanding, however, this violent and systematic opposition, the cause of immediate emancipation made rapid progress during the year. No less than twenty-five periodicals and newspapers gave it their support. One hundred and twenty-four clergymen, mostly in New England, united in an address to the public, setting forth similar sentiments. During the year John G. Whittier published his "Justice and Expediency," an earnest, tender, and eloquent appeal to his countrymen in behalf of oppressed millions who were perishing as the brute perished and whose blood was upon the nation. About the same time, Mrs. Lydia Maria Child issued her "APPEAL IN FAVOR OF THAT CLASS OF AMERICANS CALLED AFRICANS." This volume, of more than two hundred pages, was a work of rare merit, and exerted, perhaps more than any other, a powerful influence upon thoughtful and cultivated minds. At the beginning of the same year, Rev. Amos A. Phelps published his "Lectures upon Slavery and its Remedy," in a volume of nearly three hundred pages. Of this work Mr. Garrison, many years afterward, said "that it elucidated the nature of slavery, the sin of making property in man, and the duty of immediate emancipation, in a manner so masterly as never to have been surpassed by any writer since that time. It was an encyclopædia of fact, argument, illustration, and logic."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### HOSTILITY TO COLORED SCHOOLS. — MISS CRANDALL'S SCHOOL SUPPRESSED.

Slavery Hostile to Education. — Proposed Collegiate School at New Haven. — Hostile Action of the Citizens of New Haven. — Noyes Academy in New Hampshire. — Colored Students admitted. — Institution broken up. — Miss Crandall's School in Connecticut. — Admission of Colored Pupils. — Hostility of the People. — Arbitrary Legislation. — Imprisonment of Miss Crandall. — Samuel J. May. — Arthur Tappan. — Trial. — Failure of the Prosecution. — Persecution of Miss Crandall. — Incendiary Attempts. — Abandonment of her School. — Her Opposers Triumphant.

AMONG the essential conditions of American slavery was the necessary ignorance of its victims. By its own inexorable laws they were doomed to moral and mental debasement. Consequently the slaveholder and his abettors looked with disfavor upon any efforts which were designed or calculated to instruct either the slave himself or any of his race. Free persons of color, at the North as well as the South, had felt the full force of this admitted necessity. Generous efforts to instruct their darkened minds encountered opposition, as they themselves were made to feel the repressive influences of this wicked and abnormal system. Wherever such efforts had been made to establish institutions for the higher culture of colored youth, they had signally failed. The antislavery movement, however, had excited higher hopes and aspirations. The more advanced of the colored race, and their friends who were pledged to the immediate emancipation of the slave and the protection and elevation of free people of color, saw the necessity and recognized the duty either of founding institutions for their education or of opening for their admission those already established. The well-known devotion of New England to popular education caused them to look to her for en-

couragement, as that portion of the country where their hopes might be realized. But they were speedily doomed to disappointment, and made to feel that, though the tree of slavery was planted on Southern soil, its branches overshadowed, as its roots penetrated, the whole land, shedding its blighting influences on Northern as well as Southern hearts.

At the convention, held in Philadelphia in 1831, of the delegates of free people of color from the several States, it was resolved to make an effort to establish a collegiate school on the manual-labor plan. A committee was appointed to raise the necessary funds and carry, if possible, the plan into execution. In their appeal to the public, they stated with great clearness the difficulties experienced by colored children in gaining admission into seminaries of learning, as also into manufacturing and mechanical establishments. They further recommended that the proposed institution should be located in the city of New Haven, and that there should be incorporated into its plan the principle of self-support; so that students might, with the attainment of that object, cultivate habits of industry and obtain useful information and skill in mechanical and agricultural pursuits while pursuing their classical studies. Bishop White of Philadelphia and several clergymen of distinction gave their prompt and cordial approval to the project.

Connecticut was distinguished for its literary institutions, its system of common schools, its mechanical pursuits and diversified industries. This motion, however, to establish within its borders a seminary of learning for the education and higher culture of colored youth created the most profound excitement and called forth the most determined resistance. The mayor of New Haven at once summoned a meeting of its citizens "to take into consideration a scheme said to be in progress for the establishment in this city of a college for the education of colored youth." At this meeting, held on the 8th of September, 1831, it was resolved by the mayor, common council, and legal voters of the city that "we will resist the establishment of the proposed college in this place by every lawful means." In the preamble to these resolutions, the



doctrine of immediate emancipation and the founding of colleges for the education of colored people were pronounced an unwarrantable and dangerous interference with the internal concerns of the State, which ought to be discouraged. In that crowded assembly, in a city distinguished for its educational institutions and facilities, which had responded so generously to the claims of the Colonization Society for the civilization of Africa, and the appeals of the missionary enterprise for the conversion of the world, only one voice was raised against that unjust, unchristian, and inhuman resolution. That was the voice of Rev. Simeon S. Jocelyn, who was among the earliest, not only to accept the doctrine of immediate emancipation, but to labor earnestly and persistently for the moral and educational elevation of the free people of color. Thus, by the cruel and wicked prejudices of the people of Connecticut, many of whom professed a personal interest in that gospel whose practical requirements and realization they then so strangely ignored, was defeated this beneficent purpose for promoting the improvement of the colored race.

This action of the citizens of New Haven, while it discouraged, did not prevent still further efforts for the establishment of such an academic institution in New England. Several thousand dollars were subscribed, and several places were recommended for its establishment. The trustees of the Noyes Academy, in Canaan, New Hampshire, opened their institution for the admission of colored students. Several young men entered the academy, and for a time the friends of the colored race were encouraged to believe that an institution had been found where colored youth might enjoy the means of acquiring an advanced education. That hope, however, was soon dispelled. A legal town-meeting was called, and held on the 3d of July, 1835, at which, after discussion, a committee was chosen to remove the academy. From an official account, published in the New Hampshire "Patriot," the leading Democratic paper of the State, it appears that, on the morning of the 10th of August, the committee, aided by some three hundred persons with one hundred yoke of oxen and the necessary apparatus, proceeded to the execu-

tion of their discreditable task. It is stated that the most respectable and wealthy farmers of that vicinity were engaged in this lawless procedure. "The building," says this official account, "was safely landed on the corner near the Baptist meeting-house, where it stands, not like the monument on Bunker's heights, erected in memory of those departed spirits who fought and fell struggling for liberty, but as the monument of those living spirits who are struggling to destroy what our fathers have gained."

This was in the year of grace 1835. And what was the offence? A dozen colored youth were admitted into Noyes Academy, an incorporated institution in the State of New Hampshire, on equal terms with other youth, for moral and intellectual culture. That was all,—the very head and front of their offending. For this offence the citizens, in formal town-meeting assembled, voted to remove it from its foundations. The committee, with unseemly alacrity, hastened to carry into effect this strange vote; and, as if that were not enough, as if servility must needs go further, all unconscious of the disgrace involved in such a record, rushed into print, and sent an official account to the leading paper of the State,—and all this, too, in the name of "liberty"! Could there be a greater or stranger confusion of ideas? Could the fanaticism of slavery go further? How demoralized the community which could furnish the actors in such a drama, and thus applaud it when enacted!

Miss Prudence Crandall, a member of the Society of Friends, had established a good reputation as a teacher in Plainfield, Connecticut. In the autumn of 1832, invited by several prominent citizens, she purchased a large house in the village of Canterbury, and established a school for young ladies in the higher branches of education. A few months after commencing her school, she admitted Sarah Harris, a colored girl, a member of the village church. She had attended the district school, and desired, to use her own words, "to get a little more learning,—enough to teach colored children." Although she had been a classmate of some of Miss Crandall's pupils in the district school, objection was

soon raised to her remaining in this institution, and remonstrances were made by several patrons of the new school against her continuance, though some of them belonged to the same church, and though they knew nothing to her discredit, except that she belonged to the proscribed race. But their prejudices against color and their pride of caste were aroused, and they were resolved it should never be said that their daughters "went to school with a nigger." Miss Crandall had invested all her property in the building, and had incurred something of a debt besides; and the alternative presented to her of dismissing that colored girl or losing her white pupils was a sore trial. She, however, met the issue bravely, grandly, and in the spirit of self-abnegation and devotion to principle, leaving the event with God.

Having determined on her course, she advertised that at the commencement of her next term, her school would be opened for young ladies and little misses of color, and others who might wish to attend. The people of Canterbury, on learning the fact, were greatly enraged and thrown into intense excitement. A town meeting was called on the 9th of March, before the term began, to adopt measures to avert or abate the threatened "nuisance." In the mean time Miss Crandall was grossly insulted and slandered. Rev. Samuel J. May, then a pastor in the neighboring town of Brooklyn, George W. Benson, and Arnold Buffum, president and agent of the New England Antislavery Society, were commissioned by her to represent her cause at the town meeting. At the meeting resolutions were introduced protesting against the opening of such a school, and suggesting the appointment of the selectmen to wait upon Miss Crandall and persuade her, if possible, to relinquish the project. Andrew T. Judson, a Democratic politician, afterward a member of Congress and judge of the District Court of the United States, resided on Canterbury Green, in a house adjoining the building of the school; and this Democrat was horrified that a school for negro girls was to be opened near his mansion. Confessedly a leader in this mean and cruel crusade against that noble woman and her benevolent design, he addressed the meeting in a strain of



bitter and relentless hostility, and avowed his determined purpose to defeat it.

When he closed, Mr. Buffum and Mr. May presented a letter to the moderator from Miss Crandall, requesting that they might be heard in her behalf. But Judson and others sprang to their feet, and with clenched fists admonished them to be silent. They were not permitted to speak, and she was thus denied even the courtesy of a hearing. And yet these gentlemen went to the meeting ready to agree with the people of the town, if they would repay to Miss Crandall what they had advised her to give for the house and allow her time to remove, that she would transfer her school to some more retired part of the town and vicinity. But the meeting would hear nothing, and adjourned with the purpose to crush the enterprise with or without law.

Notwithstanding, however, this opposition, the school was opened with some fifteen or twenty pupils. Then commenced the most disgraceful persecutions. Her pupils were insulted whenever they appeared in the village, the stores were closed against her and them, her well was filled with filth, and her house was repeatedly assailed. An attempt was made under the Vagrant Act to drive her young pupils from the town; but, on Mr. May and other Brooklyn citizens giving bonds to the amount of ten thousand dollars, that scheme was abandoned. Baffled in their attempts, Mr. Judson and the town authorities repaired to the legislature and secured the passage of a law providing that no person should establish in that State any school or other literary institution for the education of colored persons who were not inhabitants of the State, nor harbor or board any colored person not an inhabitant of the State for that purpose, without the consent in writing from the selectmen of the town in which such school or institution might be instituted. This act, disgraceful alike in its passage and provisions, was received by the inhabitants of Canterbury and vicinity with firing of cannon, ringing of bells, and other demonstrations of general rejoicing.

A few days after its passage, Mr. May and George W. Benson visited Miss Crandall, to advise with her in regard to that

inhuman and wicked enactment by which a woman might be fined and imprisoned for giving instruction to colored children. After consultation, it was determined, should she be prosecuted, that she should remain in the hands of those with whom the hideous act originated. On the 27th of June Miss Crandall was arrested, brought before two justices of the peace, and committed to take her trial at the next term of the county court, in the month of August. Mr. May and his friends were informed that she was in the hands of the sheriff, and would be committed to jail unless bonds were given for her appearance. According to agreement, however, the bonds were not given, and the responsibility was thrown upon the framers of that infamous statute of giving the required sureties themselves, or of committing an unoffending woman to jail. A man had recently been confined in the jail for the murder of his wife. The jailer, at the request of Mr. May, had his cell put in order for her comfortable reception, should she be sent there. The sheriff and jailer saw and felt that her incarceration would bring dishonor upon the State and deep disgrace upon her persecutors, and they lingered, in the hope that something might be done to avert the disagreeable alternative.

But she and her friends remained firm. When night came, that brave and devoted woman was delivered into the hands of the jailer, and led into the cell from which a murderer had just passed to execution. Her friends retired, and she remained in the prison till the morning, when the required bonds were given. The intelligence of these proceedings went over the country, exciting no small amount of feeling in all, and in the better portion of the community intense indignation at the inhuman law and the scandalous proceedings that preceded and led to its enactment. Arthur Tappan, with characteristic promptness and generosity, wrote at once to Mr. May, indorsing his conduct, authorizing him to spare no reasonable cost in her defence, employ the ablest counsel, and consider him responsible for the expense. Accordingly, Hon. William W. Ellsworth, Hon. Calvin Goddard, and Hon. Henry Strong, eminent members of the Connecticut bar, were retained. These distinguished lawyers expressed the

opinion that the law was clearly unconstitutional, and would be so pronounced by a competent judicial tribunal.

But the persecution against Miss Crandall went on. Even physicians refused to attend the sick of her family. The trustees of the church forbade her to come with any of her family into the house of the Lord. But her friends stood by her with unfaltering devotion. Arthur Tappan left his pressing business, visited her, and was deeply affected by her heroism and the courage and trust with which she inspired her pupils. To Mr. May he said: "The cause of the whole oppressed race of our country is to be much affected by the decision of this question. You are almost helpless without the press. You must issue a paper, publish it largely, send it to all persons whom you know in the county and State, and to all the principal newspapers throughout the country. Many will subscribe for it and contribute largely to its support, and I will pay whatever it may cost." Thus encouraged and supported by the deep sympathy, large-hearted benevolence, and sagacious counsel of Mr. Tappan, Mr. May commenced the publication of a paper called the "Unionist." Charles C. Burleigh, then living with his parents in the neighboring town of Plainfield, assisting them on their farm, and at the same time pursuing his legal studies, was sought out and made its editor. Mr. Burleigh thus commenced his antislavery career, which he pursued with earnest fidelity to the end of the system he helped to destroy. By common consent, his talents and forensic abilities were acknowledged to be of a high order. None ever doubted his conscientiousness; though many regretted certain idiosyncrasies of mind and manner, which unquestionably impaired somewhat his usefulness, as they marred the general symmetry of his character.

On the 23d of August, 1833, the trial of Miss Crandall for the crime of teaching a school for colored girls was commenced in the court of Windham County, Judge Joseph Eaton presiding. Mr. Judson, her persecutor and prosecutor, took the lead. He denied that colored persons were citizens in the States where they were not enfranchised, and he insolently inquired why a man should be educated who could not be a



freeman. She was defended with signal ability. Though Judge Eaton charged that he regarded the law as constitutional, the jury failed to return a verdict for conviction. It was understood that seven were for it, and five were for acquittal.

Foiled in this attempt to procure conviction, and impatient of delay, the prosecutors of the suit, refusing to wait for the December term of the same court, commenced a new trial before Judge Daggett, of the Supreme Court. The judge, a native of Massachusetts, had risen rapidly in his profession, had served in the United States Senate, and was then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Connecticut. He was known to have little sympathy with the colored people, and to have been an advocate of the new law. Of course, no great surprise was felt at his adverse decision. In an elaborate opinion, he maintained the constitutionality of the law, and declared that he was not aware that free blacks were styled citizens in the laws of Congress, or of any of the States. The jury rendered a verdict against Miss Crandall, and her counsel at once filed a bill of exceptions and appealed the case. Before the highest tribunal her cause was argued in July, 1834. That court, however, decided that the case ought to be quashed for legal informality, and tamely evaded the constitutional question by declaring it "unnecessary for the court to come to any decision on the question as to the constitutionality of the law."

Soon after this failure an unsuccessful attempt was made to burn Miss Crandall's house. In spite, however, of persecutions, insults, imprisonments, and the attempt to destroy her dwelling, this brave woman struggled on in her work of disinterested benevolence. But her enemies were determined and implacable. On the 9th of September, near the hour of midnight, her house was assaulted with clubs, doors and windows were broken in, and the building left nearly untenable. Her few friends, having been invited to look upon the scene of desolation, and deeming further effort unavailing, if not perilous to life and limb, advised the abandonment of the enterprise. Acting upon this advice, the heroic lady, who had

breasted and braved the violence of the mob and the undisguised intolerance of the community for seventeen months, disbanded her school, and sent twenty young girls to their homes, whose only offence, their enemies being judges, was the color of their skin and their strong desire to learn. Mr. May states that when he gave that advice the words blistered his lips and his bosom glowed with indignation. "I felt ashamed," he said, "of Canterbury, ashamed of Connecticut, ashamed of my country, ashamed of my color."

It is in the light of such facts that the deep degradation and demoralization reached by even the New England of those days appears, when not only the demands of humanity and religion were resisted, but the peculiar claims of womanhood and childhood were rudely and roughly ignored. A lonely and, from all that appears, a lovely woman of culture and character, at the head of a seminary of learning, yields to the importunity of a colored girl of seventeen to get a little more learning, that she may teach the children of her race, encounters the rough hostility of the whole community, with hardly a dissenting voice in the church or out of it, and is compelled to accept the cruel alternative of turning her back, or of relinquishing the patronage of those on the faith in whom she embarked her all and ventured on the enterprise. The scene shifts.

A new act in the drama, a real tragedy, without its blood, opens. The same brave woman, true to her convictions and deaf to the claims of selfish fear and interest, appears upon the stage with twenty young girls, coming up from as many lonely homes of a proscribed people, anxious to learn. To aid them, to educate twenty immortal minds for their high mission on earth, she not only sacrifices position and popular favor, but bows beneath the crushing weight of public obloquy, and hazards, not to say sacrifices, her pecuniary means without reserve. And what had the public of Canterbury and Connecticut for such sublime devotion to principle, for such heroic self-sacrifice? Social ostracism, personal insult, exclusion from God's house, a criminal trial, conviction and incarceration in a murderer's cell! Nor was this the work of unprin-

cipled politicians and fellows of the baser sort alone. The town and its church, the county and its court, the State and its legislature, all joined in this dark business and contributed to this sad result.

Do questions rush to the lip? How could such things happen? How could there be philanthropy, or piety, or even common honesty and humanity, or anything but barbarism, in a community which could enact or tolerate such scenes? And yet there may have been; for perfect consistency is a "jewel" rarely found, an exotic which seldom blooms on earth.

And yet these facts are both a puzzle and a mortification, antagonistic alike to the doctrines of the Decalogue and of the Declaration of Independence. So intensely unchristian, barbarous, and despotic, they provoke, if they do not entirely justify, the severe criticisms against both the Christianity and republicanism not only of those but of later days. For these facts were but representative of much that was then taking place throughout the country, and which afterward transpired.

These scenes of Canterbury were hardly more disgraceful than those which were witnessed twenty years later in Boston, at the rendition of Anthony Burns. Andrew T. Judson, commanding the silence of the committee appearing in behalf of Miss Crandall, in that old meeting-house at Canterbury, was no more an instrument of the Slave Power than was Mr. Webster, years afterward, demanding from the steps of the Revere House, in Boston, that the citizens of New England should "learn to conquer their prejudices." The trustees of that church, excluding Prudence Crandall and her pupils from the house of God, were hardly more obnoxious to just condemnation than were the Fugitive Slave Act discourses and "South Side Views" of subsequent years. They all reveal the sad truth that the virus of slavery was coursing through the veins of the body politic, destroying its healthy action, weakening its powers of reason and conscience, so that the language of the prophet seems not too strong: "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint."



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### NATIONAL ANTISLAVERY CONVENTION AT PHILADELPHIA. — ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN ANTISLAVERY SOCIETY.

National Antislavery Convention called. — Excited Condition of the Public Mind. — Conference held at the House of Evan Lewis. — Assembling of the Convention. — Its Officers. — Committee on the Declaration of Sentiments. — Resolutions. — Speeches of Lewis Tappan, Amos A. Phelps. — Female Antislavery Societies recommended. — The Constitution. — The Object of the Society the entire Abolition of Slavery. — Conference on the Declaration of Sentiments. — Words of Elizur Wright, Jr. — Declaration of Sentiments prepared by Mr. Garrison. — Reported by Mr. Atlee. — The Declaration adopted. — Signatures to the Declaration. — Its Doctrines. — Officers of the Society, Elizur Wright, Jr., John G. Whittier, Amos A. Phelps, Theodore D. Weld, Ellis Gray Loring, Robert Purvis. — Increase of Auxiliary Societies.

THE New England Antislavery Society, at its first anniversary, adopted a resolution, introduced by Mr. Garrison, instructing its board of managers to call a meeting of the friends of abolition to form a national antislavery society. No definite action, however, was taken.

In the autumn of 1833 Evan Lewis, a member of the Society of Friends, conductor of "The Friend," an antislavery journal in Philadelphia, and a man of whom it was said "he was afraid of nothing but being or doing wrong," visited the city of New York to persuade leading Abolitionists to unite in calling a national convention. A small meeting was held, at which, after considerable discussion, it was voted, by a mere majority, to call such a convention at Philadelphia, on the 4th of the following December. Many Abolitionists, however, entertained serious doubts whether the time had come for holding a convention for that purpose. Nor is it a matter of surprise that such should have been the fact. It required principle, nerve, moral courage, and a martyr spirit thus to lead the forlorn hope of a then most unpopular cause;

more even than when, under the cover of comparative obscurity, the New England society was organized. It was a time, too, of feverish excitement, exasperation, and intense bitterness of feeling, word, and act; when the mob violence of the street was but the counterpart of the similar though more decorous demonstrations of the counting-room, the parlor, and the church. The Colonizationists had always manifested hostility to the antislavery cause. Their society had declared in 1828, four years before the organization of the New England Antislavery Society, that "it is in no wise allied to any abolition society in America or elsewhere; and is ready, when there is need, to pass a censure upon such societies in America." The organization of societies pledged to immediate emancipation, the successful visit of Mr. Garrison to England, his unaccepted challenge of their champion to public discussion, the protest of Wilberforce and his compeers against their scheme, had so incensed its friends that even professedly Christian men were prepared to justify a resort to almost any measure to oppose and put down what they deemed a pestilent heresy. To go to Philadelphia at such a time and on such an errand was anything but a holiday affair.

On the evening preceding the assembling of the convention, a meeting of some thirty or forty delegates was held at the house of Evan Lewis, who had been chiefly instrumental in its convocation at that time. Lewis Tappan of New York presided. A committee was appointed to secure the services of some well-known citizen and philanthropist of Philadelphia to preside over the convention. Thomas Wister, a member of the Society of Friends, declined the invitation. The committee then invited Robert Vaux, of the same denomination; but he declined, though an Abolitionist. As the committee retired, not a little mortified and irritated at their ill success, Mr. May, one of their number, reports that Beriah Green sarcastically remarked: "If there is not timber amongst ourselves big enough to make a president of, let us get along without one, or go home and stay there till we have grown up to be men."

The convention assembled at the Adelphi Buildings, on the 4th of December. Beriah Green of the Oneida Institute, in

the State of New York, was elected president; and Lewis Tappan of the city of New York, and John G. Whittier of Massachusetts, were made secretaries. These officers were thus pleasantly characterized by Mr. J. Miller McKim, one of the youngest members of the convention, and ever since an active Abolitionist.

"A better man than Mr. Green could not have been selected. Though of plain exterior and unimposing presence, he was a man of learning and superior ability; in every way above the average of so-called men of eminence. Mr. Tappan, who sat at his right, was a jaunty, man-of-the-world looking person, well dressed and handsome, with a fine voice and taking appearance. Whittier, who sat at his left, was quite as fine-looking, though in a different way. He wore a dark frock-coat with standing collar, which, with his thin hair, dark and sometimes flashing eyes, and black whiskers, — not large, but noticeable in those unhirsute days, — gave him, to my then unpractised eye, quite as much of a military as a Quaker aspect. His broad, square forehead and well-cut features, aided by his incipient reputation as a poet, made him quite a noticeable feature in the convention."

It was then voted that delegates from antislavery societies, and all other persons in favor of emancipation without expatriation, be entitled to seats in the convention. Its sessions continued during three days. The members were admonished by the police not to hold evening sessions, as they could not be protected after dark. Committees were appointed to prepare a constitution, nominate a list of officers, and draft a declaration of principles, to which the signatures of members should be affixed. That committee consisted of Dr. Edwin P. Atlee of Philadelphia, Elizur Wright, Jr. of New York, William Lloyd Garrison of Massachusetts, Simeon S. Jocelyn of Connecticut, David Thurston of Maine, John M. Sterling of Ohio, William Green, Jr. of New York City, John G. Whittier of Massachusetts, William Goodell of New York, and Samuel J. May of Connecticut.

On the second day of its session the convention, on motion of the Rev. Charles W. Denison, editor of the "Emancipa-



tor," voted to take measures to ascertain how many clergymen in the United States were slaveholders ; and a committee of three was chosen to carry the resolution into effect. It was then moved by John Rankin of New York that the thanks of the convention be extended to those editors who have embarked in the cause of emancipation, and that to their support in the good work the members pledge their individual and collective influence. Upon this resolution the convention resolved itself into a committee of the whole, and Mr. James McCrumbell, a colored delegate from Philadelphia, was called to the chair. President Green spoke warmly for editors who had stood erect and exposed their bosoms to the shafts which calumny had thrown. "They have," he said, "stood out amidst falling missiles and jarring notes of opposition ; and, like trumpets, lifted up their voices for the poor and needy, the suffering and the dumb." He expressed to them his gratitude, and avowed his willingness to present his own "bare bosom to the foe, and receive the shafts intended for them."

Lewis Tappan followed in warm and eloquent commendation of the services of Benjamin Lundy and William Lloyd Garrison. He wished the members of the convention by their action to show to posterity that the men contemplated in the resolution were held in high esteem. "Although they are," he said, "held accursed by those who know them not, and who seek to impeach their motives and destroy their lives ; yet the coming generations shall hallow their memories and rise up and call them blessed."

Rev. Amos A. Phelps of Massachusetts earnestly supported the resolution. He referred in words of tender eulogy to the Rev. Charles B. Storrs, late president of the Western Reserve College, who had recently died at Braintree, Massachusetts. He stated that Mr. Storrs, while lying on his death-bed, requested that a pen should be placed in his hands, that he might affix his name to a declaration of antislavery principles about to be issued. "He commenced," said Mr. Phelps, "tracing his name, and had written the first word, 'Charles,' when he discovered that two of the letters had been transposed. Letting the pen fall, and turning to his brother, standing by, he ex-

claimed, with an energy peculiar to him : ‘ I can write no more. Brother, do you finish my name. Those principles are eternal truth. They cannot be shaken. I wish to give to them my dying testimony.’ ” Mr. Phelps expressed the opinion that the death of President Storrs had been hastened by over-exertion in delivering an address of great vigor and power of more than two hours in length, in behalf of the slave. Mr. Storrs was a gentleman of high promise and scholarship, of Christian principle and earnest philanthropy, in whose untimely death freedom lost one of its earliest and ablest champions. The touching scene at his death-bed is one among the evidences that the antislavery struggle in this country was born of a zeal and heroic devotion to principle which finds not many parallels in the world’s history.

The convention having unanimously adopted the resolution, Mr. Denison introduced a proposition recommending the youth of the country, without distinction of sex, to form auxiliary antislavery societies, which was unanimously adopted. A resolution, introduced by Robert B. Hall, recommending that the Christian church throughout the land should observe the last Monday evening of each month in seeking the Divine aid in behalf of the slave and of the free people of color, was then unanimously adopted ; as was also another resolution, introduced by Samuel J. May, pledging the members of the convention to an effort to secure from the several denominations to which they belonged solemn and earnest addresses in behalf of the oppressed to affiliated churches in the slaveholding States.

Mr. Garrison introduced a resolution in which it was declared that the cause of abolition eminently deserved the countenance and support of American women ; and Horace P. Wakefield of Massachusetts introduced another, hailing the establishment of ladies’ antislavery societies as the harbinger of a brighter day. These resolutions were also unanimously adopted, as were others, declaring that the fountains of knowledge, like those of salvation, should be opened to every creature ; that the laws against teaching colored people were cruel and impious ; that the statutes and customs which withhold

the Bible from the slave were inconsistent with the first principles of religious liberty ; and that the teachers of religion who failed to lift the warning voice against oppression did not declare the whole counsel of God. Kindred resolutions, breathing the spirit of liberty, justice, humanity, and Christianity, were adopted with great unanimity.

In the constitution adopted, the object of the society was declared to be the entire abolition of slavery in the United States. While admitting that each State had exclusive right to legislate in regard to its abolition, it avowed as its aim to convince the people of the slave States, by arguments addressed to their understandings and consciences, that slaveholding was a heinous crime against God, and that duty and safety required its immediate abandonment, but without expatriation. It favored the abolition of the domestic slave-trade and of slavery in the District of Columbia ; and urged the duty of elevating the character and condition of the free people of color, and of giving them equality with whites in civil and religious privileges, though it discountenanced any resort to physical force for the vindication of these rights.

But the most important action of the convention was its declaration of principles. A committee of ten had been appointed on the first day of the session to prepare such a paper. That committee, with several other members, assembled at the rooms of the chairman. Those present were invited to state their views concerning the document which all deemed so important. The suggestions made revealed great unanimity of opinion. The Rev. Samuel J. May states, in his "Recollections of the Antislavery Conflict," that Elizur Wright, Jr., gave utterance to these pregnant words : "I wish that the difference between our purpose and that of the Colonization Society should be explicitly stated. We mean to exterminate slavery from our country, with its accursed influences. The Colonizationists only wish to get rid of the slaves so soon as they become free. Their plan is unrighteous, cruel, and impracticable withal. Our plan needs but a good will and a right spirit among the white people to accomplish it."

After some time spent in this conference, Mr. Garrison, Mr.



Whittier, and Mr. May were appointed a sub-committee to prepare a draft of a paper setting forth the principles, sentiments, and purposes of the new society. The sub-committee immediately repaired to Mr. Garrison's lodgings; and, after a brief consultation, he was requested to prepare it. The sub-committee met early next morning, made a few slight alterations; and submitted the draft to the whole committee at nine o'clock. Alluding to this circumstance, years after, Mr. Whittier thus happily refers to this meeting: "I recall the early gray morning when, with Samuel J. May, our colleague on the committee to prepare a declaration of sentiments for the convention, I climbed to the small 'upper chamber' of a colored friend to hear thee read the first draft of a paper which will live as long as our national history."

For hours this document was subjected to a careful and critical examination; yet but few alterations were found necessary. Mr. Garrison had arraigned the Colonization Society with characteristic severity. But his strictures were omitted, on motion of Mr. May, for the reason that the Colonization Society could not long survive the deadly blows already aimed at it; and it was not worth while to perpetuate its memory in this declaration of the rights of man. This omission was resisted by Mr. Garrison; but, finding the committee were favorable to it, he promptly yielded, with the remark, "Brethren, it is your report, not mine."

Edwin P. Atlee, chairman of the committee, reported the declaration to the convention. Its reading produced a profound impression. It was then moved by a member of the Society of Friends that it be adopted, and that the members proceed at once to append to it their signatures. "We have," he said, "already given it our assent; every heart here has responded to it. There is a doctrine of the Friends which impelled me to make the motion I have done. First impressions are from heaven. I fear, if we go about criticising and amending this declaration, we shall qualify its truthfulness and impair its strength." But the convention thought otherwise. It was read paragraph by paragraph, and discussed for several hours; very few changes, however, were made. The venera-

ble Thomas Shipley, a Quaker, and a long-trying friend of the black man, objected to the word "manstealer," as applied to the slaveholder; but it was suggested by Lucretia Mott that the term be retained, with an amendment inserting before it the words "according to Scripture," and the suggestion was adopted. The document, with this slight modification, was then unanimously adopted.

Thus far the convention had been a success. Its numbers, its character, its harmony, and its enthusiasm were animating and auspicious. But its hours of deliberation and conference were over. Agreeing among themselves, their great work was now to convince others. Framing a platform on which they could stand, they were to go forth, and, in a conservative and captious community, make proselytes who would occupy it with them. Happily blinded to the severity and the length of the contest on which they were entering, they went forth confident in the power of truth and in the favor of the Almighty.

On the morning of the third day the declaration, which had in the mean time been engrossed, was submitted for signatures; and upon it sixty-two members, representing ten States, enrolled their names. Lucretia Mott, Esther Moore, Lydia White, Sydney Ann Lewis, and several other Quaker women of Philadelphia, were, after the first day, in constant attendance on the convention, and were deeply interested in its work. But their names were not enrolled as members, nor appended to its declaration of principles. While that declaration, however, was under consideration, Mrs. Mott, a woman of fine intellectual development, with a rare combination of firmness, gentleness, and clear moral perceptions, rose and, remarking that she was there by sufferance, said that, if permitted, she would make a suggestion. She paused for a moment, as if unwilling to offend even the prejudices of any of its members, when President Green promptly, and in a voice at once cordial and encouraging, bade her go on, while others seconded his words. She suggested several modifications, and gave the reasons why they should be made with such clearness and precision that they were readily assented to.

The declaration was a paper of great ability and power,—

the power of timely truth and of appropriate and forcible expression. Commencing with a reference to the time, fifty-seven years before, when, in the same city of Philadelphia, our fathers announced to the world their Declaration of Independence, based on the self-evident truths of human equality and rights, and appealed to arms for its defence, it spoke of the new enterprise as one "without which that of our fathers is incomplete," and as transcending theirs in magnitude, solemnity, and probable results, as much "as moral truth does physical force." It spoke of the difference of the two in the means and ends proposed, and of the trifling grievances of our fathers, compared with the wrongs and sufferings of the slaves, which it forcibly characterized as unequalled by any others on the face of the earth. It claimed that the nation was bound to repent at once, to let the oppressed go free, and to admit them to all the rights and privileges of others; because, it asserted, no man has a right to enslave or imbrute his brother; because liberty is inalienable; because there is no difference, *in principle*, between slaveholding and manstealing, which the law brands as piracy; and because no length of bondage can invalidate man's claim to himself, or render slave laws anything but "an audacious usurpation."

It maintained that no compensation should be given to planters emancipating slaves, because that would be a surrender of fundamental principles; because "slavery is a crime, and is, therefore, not an article to be sold"; because slaveholders are not just proprietors of what they claim; because emancipation would destroy only nominal, not real property; and because compensation, if given at all, should be given to the slaves.

It declared "any scheme of expatriation" to be "delusive, cruel, and dangerous." It fully recognized the right of each State to legislate exclusively on the subject of slavery within its limits, and conceded that Congress, under the present national compact, had no right to interfere; though still contending that it had the power, and should exercise it, "to suppress the domestic slave-trade between the several States," and "to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia and in



those portions of our territory which the Constitution has placed under its exclusive jurisdiction." Having thus clearly and cogently announced the principles of the enterprise thus solemnly undertaken and avowed ; having guarded with scrupulous care against all infringement of the personal or constitutional rights of any person or State, it closed with the following eloquent portrayal of the obligations still admitted, the agencies to be employed, with a pledge of unswerving fidelity to the work undertaken, and an unwavering trust in the guiding hand and final blessing of God : —

"We also maintain that there are, at the present time, the highest obligations resting upon the people of the free States to remove slavery by moral and political action, as prescribed in the Constitution of the United States. They are now living under a pledge of their tremendous physical force to fasten the galling fetters of tyranny upon the limbs of millions in the Southern States ; they are liable to be called at any moment to suppress a general insurrection of the slaves ; they authorize the slave-owner to vote on three-fifths of his slaves as property, and thus enable him to perpetuate his oppression ; they support a standing army at the South for its protection ; and they seize the slave who has escaped into their territories, and send him back to be tortured by an enraged master or a brutal driver. This relation to slavery is criminal, and full of danger ; IT MUST BE BROKEN UP.

"These are our views and principles, — these our designs and measures. With entire confidence in the overruling justice of God, we plant ourselves upon the Declaration of Independence and the truths of Divine revelation as upon the everlasting rock.

"We shall organize antislavery societies, if possible, in every city, town, and village in our land.

"We shall send forth agents to lift up the voice of remonstrance, of warning, of entreaty and rebuke.

"We shall circulate unsparingly and extensively antislavery tracts and periodicals.

"We shall enlist the pulpit and the press in the cause of the suffering and the dumb.

“We shall aim at a purification of the churches from all participation in the guilt of slavery.

“We shall encourage the labor of freemen, rather than that of slaves, by giving a preference to their productions ; and

“We shall spare no exertions nor means to bring the whole nation to speedy repentance.

“Our trust for victory is solely in God. *We* may be personally defeated, but our principles never. TRUTH, JUSTICE, REASON, HUMANITY, must and will gloriously triumph. Already a host is coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, and the prospect before us is full of encouragement.

“Submitting this DECLARATION to the candid examination of the people of this country, and of the friends of Liberty throughout the world, we hereby affix our signatures to it ; pledging ourselves that, under the guidance and by the help of Almighty God, we will do all that in us lies, consistently with this declaration of our principles, to overthrow the most execrable system of slavery that has ever been witnessed upon earth, to deliver our land from its deadliest curse, to wipe out the foulest stain which rests upon our national escutcheon, and to secure to the colored population of the United States all the rights and privileges which belong to them as men and as Americans, come what may to our persons, our interests, or our reputation ; whether we live to witness the triumph of LIBERTY, JUSTICE, and HUMANITY, or perish untimely as martyrs in this great, benevolent, and holy cause.”

The president of the convention made a closing address. Profound silence pervaded the hall as he rapidly glanced at the great work which had been accomplished. He referred to the constitution of the new society, to its list of officers, to the signing and the sending forth to the world of its Declaration of Sentiments, to the union and earnestness which had marked the proceedings, and to the meeting of congenial minds, where heart had beat responsive to heart in the holy work of seeking to benefit the outraged and despised colored race. He closed his speech — which for eloquence and thrilling power will never be forgotten by those who heard it — with these words of heroic self-sacrifice, faith, and trust : —

"But now we must retire from these balmy influences, and breathe another atmosphere. The chill hoar-frost will be upon us. The storm and tempest will rise, and the waves of persecution will dash against our souls. Let us be prepared for the worst. Let us fasten ourselves to the throne of God as with hooks of steel. If we cling not to Him, our names to that document will be but as dust.

"Let us court no applause; indulge in no spirit of vain boasting. Let us be assured that our only hope in grappling with the bony monster is in an Arm that is stronger than ours. Let us fix our gaze on God, and walk in the light of his countenance. If our cause be just, and we know it is, his omnipotence is pledged to its triumph. Let this cause be intertwined around the very fibres of our hearts. Let our hearts grow to it, so that nothing but death can sunder the bond."

Having finished his address, he "immediately," to use the words of one who heard him, "lifted up his voice to the Throne of Heavenly Grace in a prayer full of fervor and zeal, imploring the forgiveness and blessing of God to descend and sanctify the convention."

Such were the origin and organization of the American Antislavery Society. Its board of officers embraced many men of marked ability, as well as of recognized position and influence. Arthur Tappan was chosen president, and gave to the new association, not only the benefit of his warm devotion to the cause, but his great practical sagacity and prestige as a leading merchant of New York.

Elizur Wright, Jr., then of the same city, was made secretary of domestic correspondence, and continued in that position till 1838. He was also a member, *ex officio*, of the executive committee. Its annual reports, with slight contributions from others, were from his pen, and constitute an important part of the antislavery literature of the five eventful years in which he filled the office. Mr. Wright held a bold and incisive pen, which he ever wielded in the interests of humanity. If his words were sometimes curt and caustic, they were always vigorous and effective; and if he was sometimes impulsive and



impracticable, there was always an air of refreshing boldness and honesty in what he said and did.

Dr. Abraham L. Cox of New York was made recording secretary. He was earnest, industrious, impulsive, energetic; but not, like his compeers of that day, persistent and unflinching. Mr. Garrison was selected as secretary of foreign correspondence. For this post he was eminently fitted by his knowledge of antislavery leaders abroad, as also by their recognition of him as the foremost among the Abolitionists of this country.

There were twenty-five vice-presidents. Among them were the venerable Moses Brown of Rhode Island, an early Abolitionist and philanthropist, whose well-directed munificence was largely bestowed upon and most honorably associated with the University of that State; General Samuel Fessenden of Maine, a distinguished lawyer and a consistent Christian statesman; and Rev. Samuel J. May, who was among the earliest to espouse the then hated cause of immediate emancipation, and who for forty years was indefatigable in his labors for freedom, devoting without faltering his talents, learning, social and ecclesiastical influence, to its advocacy and defence.

There was also a large board of managers, embracing several gentlemen who had then and who have since taken an important part in the great struggle. Perhaps none have been more distinguished for their persistent and painstaking zeal than were the brothers Arthur and Lewis Tappan, William Goodell, and Joshua Leavitt, whose generous and effective labors are more particularly referred to in another connection.

There, too, was John G. Whittier, the Quaker bard, who early consecrated his genius to the cause of humanity, when to be an Abolitionist was to lose caste in church and state, society and literature. How much he did, and how nobly and beautifully he did it, will be among the most grateful recollections of that stern strife. That he was the right man in the right place may be well conjectured from his own testimony, thirty years later, when, alluding to his signature of the "Declaration of Sentiments," he could say, though wearing the green chaplet of poetic fame, with which two hemispheres had

admiringly crowned him: "I love, perhaps too well, the praise and good-will of my fellow-men; but I set a higher value on my name as appended to the Antislavery Declaration of 1833 than on the title-page of any book. Looking over a life marked with many errors and shortcomings, I rejoice that I have been able to maintain the pledge of that signature, and that in the long intervening years

" ' My voice, though not the loudest, has been heard  
Wherever Freedom raised her cry of pain.' "

Unlike most of his coadjutors of that day, he had clear conceptions of the political bearings of slavery. As editor of the "Pennsylvania Freeman," associate editor of the "National Era," and a contributor to other antislavery journals, he did much to prepare the minds of the people for political action. In counsel and action always sagacious and practical, he participated in those movements which finally resulted in the organization of that powerful party which overthrew the system of human bondage and dethroned the Slave Power. In those early days, "the clarion notes from his muse," in the words of Henry B. Stanton, "were like the inspired appeals of the Hebrew prophets, summoning the elect of God to do battle with the powers of darkness." All along the struggle, too, these lyrics of the meek-visaged but fiery-souled Quaker rang out their notes of warning and appeal. And even after rebellion had convulsed the land, and civil war had summoned its legions to the field, his strains were heard amid the din of strife, and the loyal soldier often felt their inspiration in the camp, on the march, and in the hour of battle.

Rev. Amos A. Phelps was another member of the board, who afterward evinced the sincerity and strength of his devotion by leaving an eligible position as pastor of a city congregation, to labor exclusively for the lowly and oppressed. A logical speaker and vigorous writer, he rendered invaluable service to the cause of emancipation in the earlier stages of its history. A volume of lectures was published by him in the year 1834, in which questions connected with slavery were elaborately discussed, and an earnest appeal was made to the clergy of all denominations. This work continued for a long time a text-

book for antislavery speakers and writers. From this time onward he labored assiduously and earnestly, till the time of his premature death, which occurred in 1847. He, however, not only died without being permitted to see the harvest of the seed he had so faithfully sown, but he fell at his post in that dark hour when the nation, under the inspiration and behests of the Slave Power, was fighting ingloriously on a foreign soil to extend and perpetuate the very system he had labored so faithfully to limit and extirpate.

Theodore D. Weld, perhaps the youngest member of the board, was a descendant of Jonathan Edwards and then a member of Lane Seminary. He was one of the members who were involved in the conflict with its Faculty which then and afterward assumed so much of historic interest in the annals of the antislavery struggle. A cogent reasoner and a glowing rhetorician, he was esteemed one of the most powerful platform speakers of his day. He was the author of several remarkable productions. Among them were "The Bible View of Slavery," "Slavery as it is," and "The Power of Congress over Slavery in the District of Columbia," which exerted a marked influence over the thoughtful, pious, and humane. In 1838 and 1839 he was associated, at the office in New York, with John G. Whittier and Henry B. Stanton in securing and forwarding to Congress antislavery petitions for the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia, which so excited the ire of its Southern members.

There, too, was Benjamin Lundy, the early and ever-vigilant and faithful friend of the slave; and Isaac Knapp, a silent but efficient worker, the coadjutor of Mr. Garrison in the publication of the "Liberator." There were also Ellis Gray Loring, David Lee Child, and Samuel E. Sewall, learned and accomplished lawyers of Boston, whose early consecration of personal and professional service to the cause of abolition was followed by a life-long and consistent devotion to the interests of the slave. Mr. Loring died too early to see the glorious consummation which now gladdens the sight of many of his early coadjutors. Upon that list, too, was the name of Dr. Jacob Ide of Massachusetts, who, then in the prime of his powers



and influence, made this public commitment, from which he never afterward swerved. While too many of his clerical brethren, at least, remained silent in the presence of this giant iniquity, his voice and commanding influence were ever true to the cause of the slave. Robert Purvis of Philadelphia, a young colored gentleman of talents and culture, was also a member. Feeling in his own person the wrongs of his brethren, he labored long and earnestly, with fiery zeal and fervid eloquence, to lift the heavy burden from his race.

The executive committee engaged an office in New York City, and at once entered upon the vigorous prosecution of its work. Arthur Tappan, president of the society, subscribed three thousand dollars; John Rankin, likewise a merchant of New York, subscribed twelve hundred; Lewis Tappan, one thousand; and other members and friends lesser sums, payable annually. The "Emancipator" was put upon a firmer basis, under the editorship of William Goodell, and publications in various forms were circulated with unstinted liberality. The society rapidly increased in numbers, strength, and influence. Its lecturers and agents, newspapers and occasional publications, instructed and aroused the country. Auxiliaries, adopting its principles, were rapidly organized; so that they numbered sixteen hundred and fifty, with a membership of nearly a quarter of a million, at the time of its disruption.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### LANE SEMINARY. — ANTISLAVERY ACTION.

Antislavery Debate at Lane Seminary. — Action of the Trustees. — Antislavery Students dissolve their Connection with the Institution. — Offer of the American Antislavery Society to give the Bible to Slaves. — Conduct of Managers of the Bible Society. — Abolitionists mobbed in New York. — Address issued by the Abolitionists. — Address of Massachusetts Antislavery Society. — Doctrines of the Abolitionists. — Abolitionists arraigned in the Annual Message of President Jackson. — Reply of the American Antislavery Society. — Activity of the Abolitionists. — Rapid Increase in Numbers.

THESE appeals of the new antislavery societies at once arrested public attention, though that attention oftener assumed the form of opposition than of acquiescence. Among the first to give this public recognition were the students of Lane Seminary, of which Dr. Lyman Beecher was president and Dr. Calvin E. Stowe a professor. Its students, several of whom were the sons of Southern slaveholders, were of unusual maturity of age and character. Soon after the formation of the American Antislavery Society, an auxiliary was formed in the seminary, embracing most of its members. Two of the number, Henry B. Stanton, and James A. Thome of Kentucky, attended the anniversary meeting of the parent society at New York, in the spring of 1834, at which they made speeches exciting great interest and sanguine hopes, which were more than redeemed by their subsequent career.

In the winter of 1834 – 35 a debate on the slavery question took place, lasting more than a dozen evenings, of which Mr. Stanton occupied two with remarkable eloquence and effect. Several other students participated in the debate with signal ability. But the great orator of that great debate, as conceded by all, was Theodore D. Weld. Subsequently, nearly all the students adopted antislavery views. Dr. Beecher promised to

attend the meetings, though he did not do so. It is said that he was much affected when he found the main body of the students adopting sentiments which he foresaw, or at least apprehended, must bring them into collision with the board of trustees, threatening the material injury if not the destruction of the institution. The debate caused much excitement, not only in Cincinnati, but throughout the country. The trustees ordered the disbandment of the Antislavery Society, though accompanying the order with a similar requirement of the Colonization Society. Their real and avowed purpose was to frown upon and check agitation concerning slavery in the seminary. The antislavery students, feeling that they could not, consistently with their self-respect and convictions, remain in the institution, dissolved their connection with it. Before, however, taking this step, they issued an elaborate and eloquent protest against the policy adopted; and then, as persecution sent the apostles abroad to preach the gospel, so it sent these young ministers of the gospel to proclaim the new evangel of liberty. Several of them labored faithfully for longer or shorter periods; but none rendered services more brilliant and effective than Theodore D. Weld and Henry B. Stanton.

The first anniversary of the American Antislavery Society was held in New York on the 6th of May, 1834. It was largely attended, and its proceedings were spirited and harmonious. An overture made at this meeting to the American Bible Society subsequently revealed not only the lack of sympathy with their humane object on the part of the latter, but the opposition and the rudeness of its exhibition, even by men standing high in the church. The Bible Society, having been engaged in carrying out the project of supplying every family in the United States with a copy of the Scriptures, had on its completion announced the fact to the British Bible Society; though, of course, no attempt had been made to supply the slaves. The Antislavery Society, being in session in the city of New York at the time of the annual meeting of the Bible Society, made an offer of five thousand dollars if that society would appropriate twenty thousand dollars for the supply of every slave family in the country.



A committee of seven was appointed to present this proposition to the board of managers. Lewis Tappan, chairman of the committee, having presented it, and seeing that it was about to be summarily disposed of, asked permission to say a few words in explanation. But he received neither permission nor notice from the president. He then remarked that, both as a member of the committee and as a life-director of the Bible Society and *ex officio* one of the board of managers, he claimed the right of a hearing. But no notice whatever was taken of this appeal. A motion that it be referred to the committee of distribution was carried without debate, and the board proceeded to other business. In the published account of the proceedings, and in its monthly paper, the organ of the society, no reference whatever was made either to the proposition or to the mode of its disposition. The refusal to entertain the generous offer, and its attending discourtesy, revealed the sad demoralization of even the religious men of those days. But though Mr. Tappan, who had ever been distinguished for his active and generous co-operation in every form of Christian and philanthropic effort, was so sadly repulsed by the managers, yet years afterward, at the World's Antislavery Convention in London, when asked to state the particulars of their conduct, he magnanimously refused to do so; because, he says, "I felt unwilling before such an audience to relate a circumstance so disgraceful to the managers of the Bible Society and to my native country."

During that month a circular was issued by a committee of the society, requesting its auxiliaries to hold meetings on the 4th of July; and at the same time an appeal was made to its friends to raise for its funds twenty thousand dollars. On that day the society held a meeting in Chatham Street Chapel. David Paul Brown, a distinguished lawyer of Philadelphia, had been invited to deliver the oration. A meeting, respectable in numbers, assembled; but when the orator rose to speak, his voice was drowned by the riotous demonstrations of those who had gathered to disturb and break it up. Appeals were made in vain to the rioters; and the attempt to commemorate the birthday of the nation in the name of liberty was thus violently defeated by the despotism of the mob.

A few days afterward, another mob, unquestionably incited by the violent language and appeals of some portions of the city press, sacked and damaged the house of Lewis Tappan and destroyed its furniture. Arthur Tappan and several members of the executive committee addressed a letter to the mayor of the city in relation to the unfounded accusations brought against them, disclaiming the charges freely made; and, though they could not recant any principles adopted, they avowed their willingness to live and die by the constitution of their society and its declaration of sentiments.

In that season of feverish excitement, trial, and danger, Judge William Jay, inheriting not only the honored name, but the principles and purity of the illustrious first chief-justice, at first declined a proffered office in the new society, deeming its organization premature, but afterward recalled his declination, and sought to take his share of its labors and responsibilities. His name gave prestige; his talents, learning, and integrity afforded strength; while his cautious and ready pen laid precious gifts upon its altar. His "Inquiry" is a repository of valuable facts concerning the action of the national government, and the principles and purposes of the Colonization and Antislavery Societies. It was read by scholars and statesmen, and exerted a powerful influence by enlightening an ignorant public sentiment upon the great truth that the nation was then and long had been the mere serf of the Slave Power. All his writings were "characterized by the candor of a philosopher, the accuracy of a statesman, the courtesy of a gentleman, and the charity of a Christian." Having taken his position, he became one of the executive committee, and from 1834 to 1840 contributed largely to the wisdom as well as vigor of its proceedings.

But the spirit of lawless violence continued not only in New York, but throughout the North, revealing more and more clearly the magnitude and inveteracy of the evil to be abated. The purposes of the Abolitionists were persistently misrepresented. Even good and fair-minded men, who were generally just and considerate in their opinions, were led to believe, notwithstanding the explicit avowals and disclaimers of the so-

ciety, through its constitution, Declaration of Sentiments, and official organs, that its members "were pursuing measures at variance not only with the constitutional rights of the South, but with the precepts of humanity and religion." In the year 1835 the executive committee issued an address designed to remove these false impressions. This address was signed by Arthur Tappan, John Rankin, William Jay, Elizur Wright, Jr., Abraham L. Cox, Lewis Tappan, Samuel E. Cornish, S. S. Jocelyn, and Theodore S. Wright. It was written by Judge Jay, and contained a very lucid exposition of the principles and policy of the society, and attracted marked attention both at home and abroad.

It declared that Congress has no more right to abolish slavery in the Southern States than in the French West India Islands; that the exercise of any other than moral influence to induce abolition by the State legislatures would be unconstitutional; that Congress had the right to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and that it was their duty to efface so foul a stain from the national escutcheon; that American citizens have the right to express and publish their opinions of the constitution, laws, and institutions of any and every State and nation under heaven, asserting that "we never intend to surrender the liberty of speech, of the press, or of conscience, — blessings we have inherited from our fathers, and which we mean, so far as we are able, to transmit unimpaired to our children." It also affirmed that they had uniformly deprecated all forcible attempts on the part of the slaves to recover their freedom; that they would deplore any servile insurrection, on account of the calamities that would attend it, and the occasion it might give for increased severity; that the charge that they had sent publications to the South, designed to incite the slaves to insurrection, was utterly and unequivocally false; that the charge that they had sent any publications to the slaves was false; that they had employed no agents in the slave States to distribute their publications. But they reiterated their conviction that slavery was sinful and injurious to the country, and that immediate abolition would be both safe and wise, and that they had no intention of refrain-



ing from the expression of such views in future. They also gave unequivocal expression to their views in regard to the elevation of the colored people. To the accusation that their acts tended to a dissolution of the Union, and that they wished to destroy it, they replied with emphasis: "We have never calculated the value of the Union, because we believe it to be inestimable, and that the abolition of slavery will remove the chief cause of its dissolution."

The Massachusetts Antislavery Society, too, issued an address to the public. A committee of thirty-one persons signed the address. Among the number were Samuel J. May, Samuel E. Sewall, William Lloyd Garrison, Francis Jackson, Henry C. Wright, Ellis Gray Loring, and David Lee Child. This address was issued because an attempt had been made to fix upon Abolitionists sentiments and intentions they abhorred. They categorically denied the charge made against them of a wish to violate the Constitution of the United States, and avowed their deep attachment to the Union. "No price," they said, "can be paid too great for its preservation, but the sacrifice of honor and principle." To intimations that they were guilty of circulating incendiary publications among slaves, they interposed a flat and peremptory denial and indignantly denounced the charge as false. They solemnly pledged themselves that if it could be shown that any person connected with the antislavery cause had circulated inflammatory tracts among slaves, or with a view to be read by them, "we will publicly renounce him as a foe to the peace of society and to the best interests of the oppressed." They denied that they had ever advocated the right of physical resistance upon the part of the oppressed. "We assure our assailants," they said, "that we would not sacrifice the life of a single slaveholder to emancipate any slave in the United States."

The charge of encouraging amalgamation between whites and blacks they denied, and announced their object to be "to prevent the amalgamation now going on, so far as it can be done, by placing one million of the females of this country under the protection of law." They denied, too, the accusation of interfering with the domestic concerns of the South-

ern States, by any other force than the creation of a public sentiment that shall "reach the conscience and blend with the convictions of the slaveholder, and thus ultimately work the complete extinction of slavery." Acknowledging that no change in the slave laws of the Southern States could be made unless by Southern legislatures, they distinctly declared that "neither Congress nor the legislatures of the free States have authority to change the condition of a single slave in the slave States." They closed their address by avowing their intention to discuss and promulgate their principles under the sacred privileges guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. "We have violated," they said, "we mean to violate, no law. We have acted, we shall continue to act, under the sanction of the Constitution of the United States. Nothing that we propose to do can be prevented by our opponents without violating the charter of our rights. To the law and to the Constitution we appeal."

After referring to the unconstitutional usurpations of the national government to protect slavery, and to the efforts made to prevent free discussion and the free transmission of the mails, they uttered these words of prophetic warning: "Surely we need not remind you that if you submit to such an encroachment on your liberties the days of our Republic are numbered; and that, although Abolitionists may be the first, they will not be the last, victims offered at the shrine of arbitrary power." Having set forth their principles and purposes, so completely in harmony with the theory of the government and the precepts of Christianity, in language so concise, clear, and convincing, they put the solemn and significant question to their countrymen: "Are they unworthy of Republicans and of Christians?"

But notwithstanding the declarations of those Christian men, the purity of whose lives was a guaranty of their sincerity and truthfulness, President Jackson, in his annual message of the 7th of December of that year, invited the attention of Congress to "the painful excitement produced in the South by attempts to circulate through the mails inflammatory appeals addressed to the passions of the slaves, in prints and in va-

rious sorts of publications, calculated to stimulate them to insurrection and produce all the horrors of a servile war." He expressed the opinion that no respectable portion of his countrymen could be so far misled as to feel any other sentiment than that of indignant regret at conduct "so destructive of the harmony and peace of the country, and so repugnant to the principles of our national compact and to the dictates of humanity and religion."

This language was intended to be applied to the members and officers of the American Antislavery Society and its auxiliaries. On the 28th of December the executive committee addressed to the President an elaborate and dignified protest against his accusations. In this paper, from the polished and pungent pen of Judge Jay, the propriety was suggested to the President of ascertaining the real designs of the Abolitionists before his apprehensions should lead him to sanction any more trifling with the liberty of the press, or to denounce them as misguided persons, engaged in unconstitutional and wicked attempts to effect the massacre of their Southern brethren. He was reminded that there were then three hundred and fifty abolition societies, numbering thousands of members; and the pertinent question was put to him, whether there was anything in "the character and manner of the free States to warrant the imputation on their citizens of such enormous wickedness?"

"What, sir," they asked, "is the character of those you have held up to the execration of a civilized world? Their enemies being judges, they are religious fanatics. And what are the haunts of these plotters of murder? The pulpit, the bench, the bar, the professor's chair, the hall of legislation, the meeting for prayer, the temple of the Most High. But, strange and monstrous as is this conspiracy, still you believe in its existence, and call on Congress to counteract it. Be persuaded, sir, the moral sense of the community is abundantly sufficient to render this conspiracy utterly impotent the moment its machinations are exposed. Only prove the assertions and insinuations in your message, and you dissolve in an instant every antislavery society in our land. Think not, sir, that we



shall oppose any obstacles to an inquiry into our conduct. We invite, nay, sir, we entreat, the appointment by Congress of a committee of investigation to visit the antislavery office in New York." They pledged themselves to put in possession of such committee copies of their publications and their correspondence, and to answer, under oath, all interrogations.

The committee closed their communication to the President with these words: "We have addressed you, sir, with republican plainness and Christian sincerity, but with no desire to derogate from the respect that is due you, or wantonly to give you pain. To repel your charges and to disabuse the public was a duty we owed to ourselves, our children, and, above all, to the great and holy cause in which we are engaged. That cause, we believe, is approved by our Maker; and while we retain this belief it is our intention, trusting to his direction and protection, to persevere in our endeavors to impress upon the minds and hearts of our countrymen the sinfulness of claiming property in human beings, and the duty and wisdom of immediately relinquishing it. When convinced that our endeavors are wrong, we shall abandon them; but such conviction must be produced by other arguments than vituperation, popular violence, or penal enactments."

The executive committee of the society held weekly meetings from the time of its organization to the spring of 1840. Important and weighty matters came before it, and were carefully and conscientiously considered. Objects of contumely, often standing in peril of life or limb, subjected to insult and not unfrequently to actual violence, its members discharged its high duties with firmness, dignity, and a calm trust in God. None can fail to respect the men who thus toiled on for the emancipation and elevation of a race scarcely one of whom will know that they ever lived, the honors and rewards of whose office were an ever-present obloquy and constant pecuniary sacrifice.

The activity of those men was prodigious, their labors immense. Thus, during the year 1838 there were circulated from the New York office more than 646,000 publications and documents, some thousands of them being bound volumes; and

during the year 1839 more than 724,000 of the like description. In that office, too, a system of petitioning Congress and State legislatures was carried forward on a most extensive scale. During five months of one session of Congress — and that chiefly under the direction of John G. Whittier, Theodore D. Weld, and Henry B. Stanton — it was ascertained by actual count that more than four hundred thousand signatures to petitions were sent to Congress; and it was estimated by Mr. Stanton that there were sent, under the auspices of the executive committee at New York, during the years 1837-39, more than two million signatures to Congress and to the State legislatures.

Another evidence of the earnest purpose and wise forecast of the executive committee was exhibited in their efforts to find and fit suitable agents for the great work they had undertaken. The country was canvassed, chiefly by Mr. Weld, for that purpose, and about seventy persons were brought together in the city of New York for a kind of preparatory training for their new vocation. For some two weeks they listened to the older and more experienced orators and organizers on all the phases of the great cause, and the varied demands and exigencies of the rough and perilous service they had undertaken. It was, in fact, an Institute of Humanity. After receiving their instructions and suggestions, and after being subjected to such drill and discipline as the time and place allowed, they went forth, like the seventy of old, on their mission of liberty to the slave and their errand of peace and good-will to the nation.

## CHAPTER XX.

MOBS. — OUTRAGES IN CINCINNATI. — WOMEN MOBBED IN BOSTON.

Proscription. — Theodore D. Weld. — James G. Birney. — Establishment of the "Philanthropist." — Mobs. — Meeting of the Citizens of Cincinnati. — Resolution to suppress the "Philanthropist." — Firmness of the Antislavery Committee. — Riotous Mob. — Destruction of the Press. — The "Philanthropist" continued. — Dr. Bailey. — Mobs in Philadelphia. — Continued Violence against the Abolitionists. — Orange Scott. — George Storrs. — Meeting of Citizens of Boston in Faneuil Hall. — Boston Female Antislavery Society. — Public Meeting of the Society. — George Thompson. — Mob Violence. — Mayor Lyman. — Seizure of Mr. Garrison. — Imprisoned. — Francis Jackson. — Meeting at his House. — Remarks of Miss Martineau.

ALL who openly accepted the doctrine of immediate emancipation, or in any way countenanced and defended the measures of the Abolitionists, were called to suffer. Too generally some tie of personal friendship was weakened, if not severed, the hostility of political organizations incurred, and the ban of commercial circles was marked and inexorable. Even in the associations of religion and benevolence, to be tainted with the heresy of freedom involved too often loss of caste, reputation, and influence. To believe in and defend the simple and fundamental principles of the gospel and of the Declaration of Independence generally subjected members to the supercilious sneers of their leaders, if the opposition did not assume a more active and offensive form. Even the sacred name of "liberty" was held in disesteem, became a term of reproach, a badge of disgrace, while fidelity to its claims was branded as the wildest and most mischievous fanaticism. Antislavery meetings were assailed by "gentlemen of property and standing," hand in hand with the drunken and profane rabble. Antislavery lecturers were pelted with eggs, stones, and brickbats. The lowly homes of the proscribed race, the private



dwellings of their heroic friends and defenders, and even the churches of the living God, were roughly assaulted, and sometimes sacked and burned. Printing presses and types were broken and scattered, and antislavery papers and publications were treated with undisguised neglect or scorn. Even woman forgot the gentle amenities of her sex, no less than the claims of humanity, and hesitated not to speak bitter and scornful words of their cause who were aiming to rescue her sisters in bondage from a doom more terrible than their fetters and stripes. Indeed, it is difficult, without a shudder, to think of those days of domestic estrangement and social ostracism, of political intolerance and commercial exactions, — those days when even churches and missionary and benevolent organizations were felt to be, if not “bulwarks of slavery,” serious obstacles in the way of its removal.

In the year 1832 Theodore D. Weld visited Tennessee, Alabama, and other portions of the South. While at Huntsville, he met at the table of an eminent slaveholding clergyman James G. Birney, who afterward occupied so prominent a place in the antislavery struggle. Mr. Birney was then engaged in raising cotton, and at the same time practising the legal profession, in which he had gained considerable distinction. At the table slavery and the right of the slaveholder to his slaves were discussed. Mr. Weld put the question to his host by what right he held his slaves — one of whom was a minister of the gospel — in bondage. He endeavored to answer the question ; but, although a man of culture, he utterly failed to meet the logic of Mr. Weld. Feeling that he had failed, he asked the opinion of Mr. Birney ; but he declined to give it, and continued to listen to the discussion with the deepest interest. Inviting Mr. Weld to call at his office the next day, he retired to his home, and gave the night, not to sleep, but to a deep and anxious examination of this simple but pregnant inquiry. When he called, Mr. Birney informed him that he had deeply reflected through the night upon his question, and had come to the conclusion that he could not show the right of the slaveholder to his slaves.

Becoming deeply interested in and concerned for the rights

of the bondmen, he relinquished his legal practice, became an active agent of the Colonization Society, and travelled extensively through the Southern States. He soon, however, lost confidence in that society as an antislavery agency, and became convinced that what he had fondly hoped would lead to emancipation tended rather to its prevention. At the close of the year 1833 he returned to his home in Kentucky, dissolved his connection with the Colonization Society, and emancipated his slaves. For the purpose of disseminating the doctrines of immediate emancipation, to which he had become a convert, he purchased a press and types, with the view of establishing a paper in his native State. Learning his purpose, his neighbors resolved at once to baffle his intentions. On the 12th of July, 1835, the slaveholders of Danville assembled in mass meeting, denounced the movement, and addressed to him a letter remonstrating against the establishment of an abolition journal, and avowing their purpose to prevent it. Mr. Birney, aware of his legal rights, firmly refused to yield to their demands; but his printer became alarmed and refused to engage in its publication. Finding he could not issue his paper in Kentucky, he removed his press to Cincinnati, with a view to its establishment there.

But he soon found that the same influences which rendered it impracticable to establish his paper in Kentucky existed in Cincinnati. Removing his press to New Richmond, some twenty miles distant, he commenced the publication of the "Philanthropist." His paper was highly commended for its ability and moderation, and was so well received that he removed it to Cincinnati in April, 1836. All admitted its fairness and ability; even its enemies conceded that its mode of conducting discussions was unexceptionable. Nevertheless, on the 12th of July, at midnight, his office was entered by a band of conspirators, and the press and types were much damaged. Threats were thrown out that, unless the publication of the paper was abandoned, the outrage would be repeated in a more effective manner. The proslavery presses of the city opened in full chorus upon the "Philanthropist," its editor, and friends. Every means of abuse and annoyance

was resorted to. Even handbills were posted in the streets, offering rewards for Mr. Birney's arrest and delivery in Kentucky, as a fugitive from justice. But he remained firm and stood undismayed amidst these fearful assaults.

On the 21st of July a meeting of the citizens of Cincinnati was called at the Lower Market House, to see if they "will permit the publication or distribution of abolition papers in this city." This meeting, presided over by the postmaster of the city, also a minister of the gospel, resolved that nothing less than the complete relinquishment of the publication of the paper could prevent a resort to violence. This tumultuous assemblage proclaimed, too, that they would use all lawful means to suppress any publication which advocated the modern doctrine of abolitionism. A committee of thirteen was appointed to wait upon Mr. Birney and his associates, and request them to desist from the publication of their paper; and to warn them, if they did not do so, that the meeting would not be responsible for the consequences. It was stated by the "Cincinnati Gazette," a journal which then honored itself by maintaining the right of free discussion, that eight of the thirteen members of the committee were communicants of Christian churches. They were certainly men of wealth, social position, and large influence. At its head stood Jacob Burnett, an old citizen of the Northwest, a lawyer of eminence, who had been a judge of the Supreme Court of Ohio and a senator in the Congress of the United States.

On the evening of the 28th this committee and the executive committee of the Ohio Antislavery Society, under whose auspices the "Philanthropist" was published, held a conference. The executive committee proposed to discuss the subject in public; but the market-house committee would listen to nothing but the immediate "discontinuance of the 'Philanthropist' and total silence on the subject of slavery." In case of refusal to comply with their modest request, they predicted "a mob unusual in its numbers, determined in its purpose, and desolating in its ravages." Judge Burnett expressed the opinion that the mob would consist of five thousand persons, and that two thirds of the property-holders of the city



would join in it. He thought it would be utterly vain for any man, or set of men, to attempt to restrain it ; and he asserted that it would destroy any man who should set himself in opposition to it, — thus revealing both the policy and the power of those riotous demonstrations. The members of this market-house committee were then asked, if the mob could be averted, whether they would be willing that the publications should be continued.

To this pertinent question the chairman and several of its members promptly replied that they would not. The executive committee were then graciously allowed till the noon of the next day to give their final answer whether or not they would discontinue the paper. When that hour arrived, the eight men composing the executive committee of the Ohio Antislavery Society unanimously and firmly declined to comply with the impertinent, insolent, and lawless demand. The market-house committee were hardly prepared for such a reply. Its members found themselves in a predicament they did not anticipate ; standing in the face of law and justice, and also of men who firmly planted themselves on their constitutional and legal rights. They could only turn to the mob, whose representatives they were, and hasten to resign their office, so that its announcement could appear in the morning papers of the next day.

On the evening of that day the rioters assembled, and were regularly organized with a chairman and secretary. They then resolved that the press and type of the "Philanthropist" should be thrown into the streets, and that its editor should be notified to leave the city within twenty-four hours. When darkness had settled upon the city the work of destruction commenced. The office of the obnoxious journal was entered and pillaged, the types scattered, and the press broken and thrown into the Ohio. The mob then rushed to the house of Mr. Birney ; but, not finding him, it wreaked its vengeance, with cowardly brutality, upon the humble homes of the poor colored people. About midnight, the mayor, who dishonored his name and position by his pusillanimity and imbecility, addressed the mob as "friends," told them they had

"done enough for one night," that the Abolitionists must be convinced that they "could not set at naught the public sentiment of Cincinnati," and advised them to go home, as they could not punish the guilty without endangering the innocent. And the mob, thus systematically organized by wealthy and distinguished leaders, hastened to their homes, glorying in their deed of infamy, to be to them ever afterward a reproach and shame. By this act of lawless violence, however, the ranks of the Abolitionists of Ohio received many accessions and the circulation of the "Philanthropist" was much increased. Its publication was continued, and soon passed under the editorial control of Dr. Gamaliel Bailey, a gentleman of talent, experience, and character. Although its types and presses were three times broken and scattered, that journal was continued for several years, ever an earnest and effective defender of the rights of the oppressed and the advocate of their deliverance.

As already narrated, the New York City Antislavery Society, organized in the autumn of 1833, was interrupted and driven from its place of meeting; the celebration of the 4th of July, 1834, by the American Antislavery Society, was broken up; the house of Lewis Tappan was sacked; and churches and school-houses, and the homes of colored men, were assaulted and damaged by mob violence. In the city of Philadelphia, also, a terrible riot commenced on the 13th of August, 1834, which continued during three nights. Forty-four houses, inhabited by colored persons, were assaulted, damaged, and many of them destroyed. Many blacks were brutally beaten and seriously injured, one was killed outright, and another was drowned in attempting to swim the Schuylkill to escape his tormentors. Other riotous demonstrations, less serious and fatal in their character, were made in other portions of the country.

These outrages on person and property went on increasing, and the cruel and dastardly assaults upon the Abolitionists were renewed with redoubled fury. Deeds of lawless violence were countenanced and often excited by men of wealth, of high social and political position, and sometimes by members of Christian churches. The public presses were

filled with the most scandalous and libellous accusations against leading antislavery men. Their motives, purposes, and acts were grossly misrepresented. Churches and public halls were closed against them. They were everywhere made to feel that they held property and liberty, if not life itself, at the mercy of excited, exasperated, and lawless men. To be an Abolitionist then was to be buffeted, scorned, and outraged. It was, indeed, a reign of terror.

Orange Scott, a clergyman of the Methodist church, an early, consistent, and persistent opponent of slavery, while addressing the citizens of Worcester, Massachusetts, on the 10th of August, was assaulted and his notes seized and torn to pieces by a mob led by a son of Ex-Governor Lincoln. In the same year Rev. George Storrs, another Methodist clergyman, an earnest and effective worker in the cause of emancipation, while delivering a lecture in New Hampshire, was arrested by a deputy sheriff, on the wicked charge of being "a common rioter and brawler." A few months afterward he was arrested at an antislavery meeting, and dragged from his knees while the Rev. Mr. Curtis was at prayer, on a writ of the same character, issued by Moses Norris, afterward a Democratic member of Congress and senator of the United States. This good man, universally known and recognized as such, was tried, convicted, and sentenced by a justice of the peace to the House of Correction for three months. From that unmerited and wicked sentence he appealed to a higher tribunal, and was no more molested.

One hundred and twenty-five of the citizens of Boston petitioned the city authorities for the use of Faneuil Hall for an antislavery meeting. But their prayer was peremptorily denied. Shortly afterward fifteen hundred asked for it, not to speak for liberty, but to apologize for slavery; not to resist the wicked demands of the Slave Power, but to censure and condemn those whose only offence was fidelity to liberty and devotion to the claims of the down-trodden and oppressed.

On the 21st of August, Faneuil Hall was crowded by the excited citizens of Boston. That assemblage was addressed by the aged Harrison Gray Otis, whose presence and voice were



always welcome there ; and by Peleg Sprague and Richard Fletcher, lawyers of great eminence, in whom the conservative men of those times had unquestioning confidence. These accomplished orators expatiated upon the compromises of the Constitution and the obligations of citizenship, apologized for slavery, and so presented and perverted the objects and purposes of the Abolitionists as to increase the prejudices already existing, and to deepen and intensify passions already aroused against them.

The legitimate effects of the meeting in Faneuil Hall, and of similar meetings in New York, Philadelphia, and other cities, were everywhere visible. Riotous demonstrations and violence increased. Wherever the Abolitionists appeared to proclaim their doctrines they were denounced by the press, shunned and censured by the churches, and outraged by the mob.

Several ladies in Boston and its vicinity, of culture and high social position, were early led to take a deep interest in the cause. They formed an antislavery society, and entered upon the work with zeal, resolution, and tireless industry. With different tastes and culture, opinions and beliefs, they found here common ground of action, — a common bond of union. Of this society Mrs. Maria W. Chapman, a lady of rare executive abilities and accomplishments, its secretary and one of its leading members, says : “ Our common cause appears in a different vesture as presented by differing minds. One is striving to unbind the slave’s manacles, another to secure to all human souls their inalienable rights ; one to secure the temporal well-being, and another the spiritual benefit, of the enslaved of our land. Some labor that the benefits which they feel they have derived from their own system of theology may be shared by the bondman ; others that the bondman may have light and liberty to form a system for himself. Some that he may be enabled to hallow the Sabbath day by rest and religious observances ; some, that he may receive wages for the other six. Some are forcibly urged to the work of emancipation by the sight of scourged and insulted manhood ; and others by the spectacle of outraged womanhood and weeping infancy.

Some labor to preserve from torture the slave's body, and some for the salvation of his soul. Here are differences ; nevertheless our hopes and hearts are one." Deeply grateful that they were among the early called, in those unquiet years, to such a work of self-sacrifice, these gifted and excellent women went forth cheerfully to their self-allotted task, praying "for the sake of the oppressed that God will aid us to banish from our hearts every vestige of selfishness ; for in proportion to our disinterestedness will be our moral power for their deliverance." It hardly seems credible, it is certainly not creditable to Boston and its citizens, that a company of its most refined and cultivated ladies, animated by such a spirit and laboring for such purposes could not meet in that city in safety, and that the city government could not afford them protection ; and yet such is the historical fact.

It was announced that the Boston Female Antislavery Society would hold a public meeting at their hall in Washington Street, on the 21st of October, 1835. On the morning of that day inflammatory handbills were circulated and threats were freely uttered. Appeals were made to the city authorities for protection. Instead of that these women were reminded by the marshal that they gave the city officials a great deal of trouble. It had been published and posted through the city that "the infamous foreign scoundrel, Thompson," would speak at the meeting, that it would be a fair opportunity for the friends of the Union to "snake him out," and one hundred dollars were offered to the individual who would first lay hands on him "so that he could be brought to the tar-kettle." In the autumn of the preceding year, George Thompson, one of the most gifted and eloquent men of his age, came to the United States, at the request of Mr. Garrison and other leading Abolitionists in England and America. He had so grandly distinguished himself by his brilliant and successful advocacy of West India emancipation, that when that great triumph had been won, in 1833, Lord Brougham said : "I rise to take the crown of this most glorious victory from every other head, and place it upon George Thompson. He has done more than any other man to achieve it."

He was an ardent admirer of republican institutions and a sincere friend of the United States, and ever continued his friendship, in spite of the rude buffetings he received, and the unmeasured abuse which had been heaped upon him by pro-slavery presses, politicians, and people. His coming was welcomed by the Abolitionists ; and for more than a year, in New England, the central States, and Ohio, he addressed public meetings in speeches of surpassing eloquence and power. The country was in a heated ferment, and his presence and speeches intensified the excitement and added to the bitterness which everywhere manifested itself. The press, with some honorable exceptions, denounced him as a foreign intruder, intermeddler, British emissary, and "paid agent" of the enemies of republican institutions. He was repeatedly hooted at, insulted, and mobbed ; but he never uttered an unfriendly word toward the country, and he struggled on for the removal of an evil which he pronounced "the nation's disgrace," and what would prove its ruin, if continued. A few days before this meeting he had been mobbed in Plymouth County ; and so great was the excitement against him, he was then secreted by his friends in Boston. Baffling his frenzied enemies, he shortly after left the country, and returned to his native land. But when slavery, which, more than a quarter of a century before, he sought so earnestly to destroy, plunged the nation into civil war, though sorely enfeebled by his herculean labors for humanity, he at once and boldly espoused the cause of United America. When and where there were few voices raised in its behalf, his rang out clear and strong for the imperilled land. Welcomed again to the country during its fearful conflict, it was his privilege to see the flag restored over the dismantled walls of Sumter, to look into the glad faces of emancipated thousands, and thrill their souls, as his own must have been thrilled by the scenes before him, with his words of counsel and of cheer.

The belief that he was to be at that meeting increased and intensified the excitement. To "snake out" of a company of Boston ladies that brilliant and eloquent Englishman was unquestionably one of the leading motives which in-



spired that mob of self-styled "gentlemen of property and standing."

At the hour of meeting, about thirty members of the society assembled in their room. Many others, who had striven to enter the hall, were turned back by the rioters. The president of the society, Miss Mary Parker, read a portion of the Bible, and then, in tones heard above the yellings of the mob, offered up a fervent prayer to God for his blessing upon the cause of the bondman, his forgiveness of his and their enemies, and his succor and protection in that hour of peril. While the secretary was reading the annual report, amid the noisy demonstrations of the mob, Mayor Lyman entered the room. He requested and entreated the ladies to dissolve their meeting, as he could not otherwise preserve the peace. Surrounded by masses of excited and clamorous men, these ladies demanded of the mayor protection and the dispersion of the mob. But, though confessing it to be his duty to afford them protection, he admitted that he could not do so. The meeting then adjourned, and the rioters rushed into the room, fiercely demanding Mr. Garrison.

At the earnest solicitation of the mayor, in order that he might truthfully assure the mob that he was not in the building, Mr. Garrison attempted to retire quietly to his residence by a back passage. But he was quickly discovered, seized, a rope put round him, his hat knocked from his head and cut in pieces, and his clothes torn from his body. Dragged through Wilson's Lane into State Street, he was rescued by the mayor, his posse, and several respectable citizens, and taken into the mayor's room in the old State House. From this place he was conveyed to Leverett Street Jail, to save him from the fury of the mob.

Upon the walls of that prison he inscribed these words: "William Lloyd Garrison was put into this cell on Monday afternoon, October 21st, 1835, to save him from the violence of a respectable and influential mob, who sought to destroy him for preaching the abominable and dangerous doctrine that all men are created equal, and that all oppression is odious in the sight of God." He was discharged the next day "as a

blameless citizen," and left the city for a few days, at the earnest request of the authorities.

Thus a mob of thousands, in the city of Boston, assaulted a meeting of Boston ladies, engaged in a work of self-denying beneficence, tore down and dashed in pieces their office-sign, roughly broke into their hall, dispersed their meeting, laid violent hands upon an unoffending citizen, dragged him like a culprit through the streets, and threatened him with further indignities and injuries, from which he was only saved by the friendly shelter of a prison. And this mob came not from the purlieus of Fort Hill and Ann Street, but from the counting-rooms of State Street and the parlors of Beacon Street. And all these discreditable acts were done, in the language of one of their leading organs, "to assure our brethren of the South that we cherish rational and correct notions on the subject of slavery."

On the evening of that day Francis Jackson, a brother and business partner of William Jackson, then in Congress, and a gentleman of great firmness of purpose, addressed a letter to the ladies of the Boston Female Antislavery Society, cordially offering to them the use of his dwelling-house in Hollis Street for their meetings. This generous offer was gratefully accepted, and on the 19th of November about one hundred and thirty ladies and four gentlemen assembled at Mr. Jackson's house. At that meeting Harriet Martineau, the eminent English authoress, then on a visit to this country, was present. After the transaction of business, she, at the request of Ellis Gray Loring, and much to the gratification of the meeting, gave them these words of hearty indorsement: "I had supposed that my presence here would be understood as showing my sympathy with you. But, as I am requested to speak, I will say what I have said through the whole South, in every family where I have been, that I consider slavery inconsistent with the law of God and incompatible with the course of his providence. I should certainly say no less at the North than at the South concerning this utter abomination; and I now declare that in your principles I fully agree." This eminent woman, distinguished alike for her philanthropic and literary works, was

soon given to understand that, in associating with the proscribed Abolitionists, and in avowing her assent to their doctrines, she had given offence to the fashionable and leading circles of American society. These facts and incidents convey their own moral, and indicate without commentary the barbarism of slavery and the rigorous rule of the Slave Power.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### RIOTOUS DEMONSTRATIONS.

Convention at Utica. — Mr. Beardsley. — Joshua A. Spencer. — Hall occupied by Citizens. — Meeting in the Church. — Society formed. — Mob. — Convention broken up. — Members insulted. — Gerrit Smith. — Members invited to meet at Peterboro'. — Officers of the Society chosen. — Resolution and Speech by Mr. Smith. — Antislavery Cause placed on High Principle. — Samuel J. May. — Mob in Vermont. — Mr. Knapp. — Colonel Miller. — Years of Mobs. — Dedication of Pennsylvania Hall. — Speeches by Alvan Stewart. — Mr. Garrison. — Miss Angelina Grimké. — Miss Abby Kelley. — Mob. — Burning of Pennsylvania Hall. — Impotence of City Authorities.

THERE may have been nothing striking or peculiar in the fact that similar demonstrations of this violence were exhibited and were encountered by the active friends of freedom throughout the North. Like an epidemic, as perhaps it was, — there being moral epidemics, — the spirit of riot seemed to rule the hour ; or, more probable, the disease being generally diffused, consequently, when the proper remedy was exhibited, the disturbance became as general as the malady. Hence, on the same 21st of October on which occurred the disgraceful scenes in Boston, similar demonstrations were made in Central New York and in the capital of Vermont.

On that day there assembled in the city of Utica a large and imposing convention of six hundred delegates for the purpose of forming a State antislavery society. The proposition for it came from Alvan Stewart, a resident of that city and president of a local association there. The court-house had been engaged for the purpose. When it became known that the convention was to be holden in the court-house, by the consent of the city council, certain persons, styled respectable and prominent gentlemen, called a public meeting, and adopted measures for the occupation of the same room on the day the convention

was to meet. Samuel Beardsley, a lawyer of that city, a Democratic member of Congress, declared in the most emphatic manner that "it would be better to have Utica razed to its foundations, to have it destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah, than to have the convention meet here."

This absurd declaration — so like the man who, in the debate on the United States Bank, won the famous soubriquet of "Perish credit, perish commerce" Beardsley — received the indorsement of the meeting; and it forthwith resolved to prevent, if possible, the assembling of the convention. That most eminent citizen of the place, Joshua A. Spencer, a lawyer of commanding ability, though not an Abolitionist, strenuously opposed the measure, and vindicated the right of free discussion. When the delegates assembled, they found the courthouse occupied by a crowd of excited and maddened citizens. Repairing to the Second Presbyterian church, they organized the convention by the election of Judge Brewster of Genesee County for president, and Rev. Mr. Wetmore of Utica, who had been a soldier of the Revolution, as secretary. Alvan Stewart reported the draft of a constitution, which was adopted, and the State Antislavery Society was formed, while the crowd without was clamoring for admission. Lewis Tappan then commenced reading the Declaration of Sentiments. While thus engaged, the mob broke into the church and endeavored to prevent the reading; but with his usual persistency, he continued until it was finished, when the paper was adopted by a rising vote.

A committee of twenty-five from the meeting at the courthouse then came forward, headed by Judge Chester Hayden, and presented a series of condemnatory resolutions. When the resolutions had been read, the rioters, drunk with passion and poor liquor, belched forth their maledictions. The chairman of the committee, addressing the rioters as his friends, expressed the hope that they would permit the convention to answer the accusations made against it. Mr. Beardsley, too, would have his friends "exercise patience and long-suffering, even toward such an assembly as this." He wished to know what apology the convention could make. "They profess,"

he said, "to come here on an errand of religion ; while under disguise they are hypocritically plotting the dissolution of the Union. They have been warned beforehand, have been treated with unexampled patience ; and, if they now refuse to yield to our demands, and any unpleasant circumstance should follow, we shall not be responsible."

His inflammatory and seditious harangue, whether so designed or not, had the effect to further exasperate the rioters. Curses, imprecations, and blasphemies filled the air, and threats of violence were freely made and reiterated. The convention hurriedly adjourned, and members of the committee demanded of the venerable secretary the record of its proceedings. Refusing to yield the record, he was seized by the collar and threatened with violence. "A member of the committee of twenty-five," says Samuel J. May, "a man holding an important public office, raised his cane over the head of that venerable minister of the gospel, and cried out ; 'Give the papers up, or I will strike you on the head.' At this, another of the committee, a young man, his son, sprang forward and begged him : 'Do, father, give them up, and save your life. Give them to me, and I will pledge myself to give them to you again.' " With this Mr. Wetmore complied, and he was let off without further harm.

The mob triumphed ; but the society was formed. Amid those scenes of lawlessness, brutality, and violence the constitution and Declaration of Sentiments were adopted, though no officers were elected, nor could any more business be transacted. In the public houses, in the streets, wherever they were seen, the members of the convention were insulted. It had been announced in advance that Lewis Tappan would be mobbed if he attended the convention. To a man like Lewis Tappan such a menace acted rather as a provocation than a dissuasive ; and, though it had been his purpose not to attend, this threat made him feel that it was his duty to be there. His presence, naturally enough, and that of a few other well-known Abolitionists, exasperated the rioters and excited them to more extreme violence.

Gerrit Smith was present, though not a delegate ; nor did



he intend to take any part in its proceedings. His large-hearted benevolence and antecedents, however, prevented indifference and lack of interest in such a meeting, called for such a purpose. His father had been a gentleman of vast wealth, of great landed possessions, and a slaveholder. Though he saw slavery in its mildest forms, he early realized that it was unjust, and he had hailed the day when it was utterly extinguished in his native State. He had welcomed the Colonization Society, largely contributed to its funds, and, though his views had been modified by the discussions which had taken place, had, up to that time, continued to entertain some degree of confidence in it. Becoming convinced, however, that its tendency was proslavery rather than antislavery, he paid into its treasury the balance of a subscription amounting to three thousand dollars, and abandoned it forever. He came to the Utica convention to see for himself. The scenes he there witnessed aroused and alarmed him. He could hesitate no longer. He felt that the time for him to act had come. He invited the members of the convention to meet in his township of Peterboro'. A portion accepted his invitation, and on their arrival there were cordially received by Mr. Smith and his neighbors. About three hundred members of the society were present, officers were elected, and its organization completed.

At that meeting Mr. Smith introduced a resolution declaring that the right of free discussion, given by God, and asserted and guarded by the laws of the country, was one so vital to the freedom, dignity, and usefulness of man that it could not be surrendered without consenting to exchange liberty for slavery, and dignity and usefulness for debasement and worthlessness. He supported his resolution in a speech of rare and convincing force. Placing free discussion on the basis of a Divine right, he wanted men to defend it on the ground that God gave it. "It is not to be disguised," he said, "that war has broken out between the South and the North, not early to be terminated. Political and commercial men, for their own purposes, are industriously striving to restore peace; but the peace they accomplish will be superficial and hollow. True and permanent peace can only be restored by removing the

cause of the war, — that is, slavery. It cannot ever be established on any other terms. The sword, now drawn, will not be sheathed until the deep and damning stain is washed out from our nation. It is idle, criminal, to speak of peace on any other terms.” He declared that he did not wish to muster on their side, in the great battle between liberty and slavery, those who were willing to leave their countrymen to the tender mercies of slavery forever. But they wanted that class, be it ever so small, who “will stand on the rock of Christian principle.” This language was discriminating and prophetic. Seldom, during the thirty years’ struggle then commencing, was it ever more correctly characterized. It placed the cause of emancipation on the high plane of conscience and religious obligation, and foreshadowed a peaceful solution of the great problem before them which only the fewness and lukewarmness of its friends and the madness of its foes prevented.

In October of the same year, Samuel J. May gave several lectures in Vermont, where he was five times mobbed. He was invited to address the Vermont Antislavery Society at Montpelier, during the session of the legislature. The hall of the House of Representatives was obtained for his first meeting, which was held on the evening of the 20th of October. The hall was filled, many members of the legislature being present. Eggs and stones were thrown through the windows, Mr. May only pausing to say, as they passed by: “Ah, we are contending with greater evils than these!” Chauncey L. Knapp, then a publisher of the “State Journal,” afterward a member of Congress from Massachusetts, here arose and appealed to the sheriff of the county, who was present, to arrest those outside who were disturbing the meeting. But that functionary shrank from the performance of his duty.

At the close of the meeting Mr. May was invited to address the people in the largest church in the village, and accepted the invitation. The next day placards were posted through the town warning the people against attending the meeting, as it would be broken up by violence. In the afternoon of that day, while the gentlemen of Boston were assaulting the Female Antislavery Society in that city and the mob in

Utica was dispersing the convention there, the president of the bank, the postmaster, and five other leading citizens of the capital of Vermont addressed a letter to Mr. May, requesting him to leave the town "without any further attempt to hold forth the absurd doctrines of antislavery, and save them the trouble of using any other measures to that effect." Though a gentleman of marked gentleness of manner and speech, he was not the man to be deterred from the performance of a high duty by such a request, nor by any menace, however violent.

At the hour appointed, a prayer having been offered by Rev. Mr. Hurlburt, Mr. May rose to address the meeting, which thronged the house. Scarcely had he uttered a sentence when the ringleader of the mob, Mr. Hubbard, president of the bank, rose in the midst of a gang of rowdies, and peremptorily demanded that he should refrain from speaking. To this demand he replied: "Is this the respect paid to the liberty of speech by the free people of Vermont? Let any one of your number step forward and give reasons why his fellow-citizens, who wish, should not be permitted to hear the lecture I have been invited here to deliver. If I cannot show these reasons to be fallacious, I will yield to your demand. But, for the sake of our essential rights, I shall proceed, if I can."

Commencing his lecture anew, he was again assailed by boisterous outcries from Hubbard and his associates. Mr. Knapp remonstrated against such proceedings, and implored the people to desist from a proceeding so disgraceful. But his words were unheeded by the mob, which, with noisy threats, rushed toward the pulpit. At that moment Colonel Miller, a brave coadjutor of Dr. Samuel G. Howe in the Greek Revolution, a man of well-known courage and great physical power, stepped forward in front of the advancing rioters, and said to Mr. Hubbard, their leader, "If you do not stop this outrage now, I'll knock you down." The advancing mob was checked; but the people were alarmed and hurried from the house, the meeting was broken up, and the purposes of the ruffians were accomplished.



An account of these disgraceful proceedings was published by Mr. Knapp, and contributed not a little to the general awakening of the people of the State. This exposure of the rioters and of the disgraceful conduct of their ringleaders, headed by a bank president, brought down upon him threats of violence ; but they ended in nothing more serious than the removal of his office-sign, which was flung into the river.

These high-handed outrages, perpetrated on the same day in Boston, Montpelier, and Utica, were noised abroad ; and though deprecated and condemned by the faithful few were generally applauded, alike at the North and South, by those who considered Abolitionists out of the pale of legal protection, to be treated as the enemies of their country and race.

The riotous demonstrations which had marked the year 1834 seemed to culminate in the year 1835, in which a reign of terror prevailed throughout the free States. Churches and public halls were assaulted, life and limb were endangered, antislavery speakers were rudely and roughly handled, and often placed in circumstances of imminent peril. Rev. Jonathan Blanchard, afterward president of Wheaton College, spent a portion of that year in delivering lectures in Pennsylvania. Within the brief space of one month, twenty-five of thirty meetings were interrupted, and many of them broken up.

Henry B. Stanton, on leaving Lane Seminary, was at once employed as lecturer and agent of the American Antislavery Society. Being earnest, enthusiastic, and eloquent, he took his place at once among the most prominent and popular of the antislavery orators of that day. Between that time and the year 1840, when he was sent to England to attend the World's Convention, he delivered in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania more than one thousand addresses and lectures. Though he was resolute, adroit, and magnetic, and, of course, had uncommon power over popular assemblies, more than one hundred and fifty of those meetings were interrupted and partially or completely broken up by violence.

Theodore D. Weld, leaving Lane Seminary at the same time, engaged for two or three years in the same work, — mainly in the Central States and the West. He, too,

possessed in an eminent degree those rare gifts of oratory whose mission it generally is to soothe and subdue as well as to thrill and convince. And yet the demoniac rage of those proslavery times was too great for even his persuasive powers; and he, too, passed through a continual series of like outrages, many of which, especially at the West, were of a most brutal and violent character. And these are but illustrations of those dark and troublous times in which the early pioneers of immediate emancipation were called to act, and in which they revealed the strength of their principles, the firmness of their purposes, and the heroism of their characters.

Among the deeds of lawlessness which characterized those days, the burning of Pennsylvania Hall stands out in disgraceful pre-eminence, in which the violence of the mob was only equalled by the pusillanimity of the city government. Excluded from churches and halls, the Abolitionists and other friends of free discussion in Philadelphia erected in that city, at the cost of about forty thousand dollars, Pennsylvania Hall. It was dedicated on the 14th of May, 1838, and David Paul Brown was selected as the orator of the occasion. LIBERTY was the theme of his eloquent oration. A poetical address, from the pen of John G. Whittier, was read by Charles C. Burleigh. Letters were received and read from the most eminent lawyers of the State.

Walter Forward, afterward Secretary of the Treasury, in response to the invitation to be present, wrote that the right to speak, to write, and to petition governments must not be abridged, questioned, or surrendered. "They are to be," he said, "fearlessly asserted at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances." Thomas Morris, then senator from Ohio, sent a long, earnest, and eloquent letter, in which the right of "free discussion — discussion without fear of the pistol of the duellist, the knife of the assassin, the fagot of the incendiary, or the still more dangerous fury of the unbridled mob" — was declared to be a right the people must and would have. The Rev. Dr. S. S. Beman of the State of New York, who, twelve years later, like too many of the early advocates of freedom that faltered and yielded to the fearful pressure, gave in his ad-

hesion to the Fugitive Slave Act, could not be present ; but he sent an expression of his abhorrence of chains and stripes, and the joy he felt that there was a spirit in existence and awake in Philadelphia which " will not bow to the altar of slavery, nor tamely submit to the dictation of those who declare in high places that it is a wise and holy institution, and that it shall be perpetual."

During three days meetings were held and speeches were made to crowded assemblies for temperance, for the Indian, and for the slave. Alvan Stewart spoke of the hall they were then consecrating to free discussion, and which the mob was so soon to give to the flames, as " Pity's home," the spot to which " the pilgrim of humanity " would come, the " resting-place of the fugitive," " the slave's audience-chamber," around which " the sympathies of noble hearts and the prayers of the poor would gather." Charles C. Burleigh, Alanson St. Clair, Arnold Buffum, and others, joined in dedicating that hall to the rights and interests of humanity.

At that time a national convention of antislavery women was sitting in the same city, and it was announced that some of its members would address the audience on the evening of the third day. The room was thronged, and thousands went away, unable to find entrance. A vast crowd gathered outside of the building, volleys of stones were hurled against the windows, and the audience was interrupted with yells and other riotous demonstrations of a determination to break up the meeting. Many, too, within the hall, joined in this attempt.

Mr. Garrison, referring to the sneers of the slaveholders and their allies against the labors of the women, maintained that every good cause ultimately triumphed which received their support ; and he averred that West India emancipation was " mainly owing, under God, to the quenchless devotion, untiring zeal, and indomitable perseverance of the women of England." In the presence of the disorderly spirits within and without the building, who sought to silence the voice of free discussion, he proclaimed that there should be no silence until the howlings of the bereaved slave-mother were turned into shouts of joy.



In the midst of these shoutings and the tumult of the rioters, Mrs. Maria W. Chapman of Boston arose, and calmly expressed her earnest desire that "the spirit of Divine truth might so far penetrate the hearts of all present that they would be prepared to listen to the wail now coming up to them from the burning fields of the South." Miss Angelina Grimké then addressed the stormy assemblage, pleading with earnest, tender, and persuasive eloquence the cause of the slave. She said she was brought up under the wing of slavery, had seen its horrors and witnessed its demoralizing influences. She had never seen "a happy slave," though she had seen him "dance in his chains." Declaring that men who held the rod over the slave ruled in the councils of the nation, she, as a Southern woman, attached to the land of her birth, appealed to the women of Philadelphia to imitate the zeal and love, faith and works, of their English sisters for the deliverance of the oppressed.

This eloquent Southern woman, self-exiled from her native State because of her abhorrence of slavery, was followed by Miss Abby Kelley of Massachusetts. Miss Kelley was a young lady of superior abilities, personal attractions, and accomplishments. Early accepting the doctrine of immediate emancipation, she zealously espoused the cause of freedom and consecrated to its advocacy time, talent, property, and health. For more than a generation she labored with tireless energy in that self-denying service. If her stern and unsparing denunciations against slaveholders and their allies were sometimes applied, with too little discrimination, to those who did not fully accept her views and adopt her modes of action in their opposition to slavery and the Slave Power, none who knew her failed to recognize the sincerity of her convictions and the integrity of her purpose.

Rising on that occasion to address, as she said, for the first time, a promiscuous assembly, she declared that it was not "the maddening rush of those voices," nor "the crashing of those windows" that called her before them; but it was "the still, small voice within" that bade her open her mouth for the dumb, and plead the cause of God's perishing poor.

Early on the morning of the 17th the mob began again to assemble about the hall. The board of managers called upon the police and the mayor for protection; but the day passed without any efficient measures by these officials for the dispersion of the rioters and the promotion of order. But about sunset the mayor informed the board that he would disperse the mob if the building was placed in his hands. The keys were accordingly given to him; and he addressed the riotous assemblage, assuring them that there would be no meeting that evening, as the building had been given up to the authorities for protection. He reminded the excited and lawless thousands before him that he looked on them as his police; for, he said, "we never call out the military here." Bidding the crowd good night, he retired to his office.

The mob, separating for a short time, immediately re-assembled before the hall, and commenced their assaults upon its doors and windows. Summoning his force of police and fire-companies, the mayor found himself utterly powerless for the protection of the hall; and that beautiful building, consecrated to freedom and to free discussion, was soon enveloped in flames. It is estimated that fifteen thousand persons looked on that work of destruction, unable, if willing, to stay its progress. Having accomplished their object, the rioters, with characteristic cowardice, meanness, and brutality, assailed, during the next two days, the negroes of the city. They attacked and set fire to "the shelter for colored orphans," a charitable institution, having no connection with the Abolitionists. Bethel Church was attacked and damaged; and the private dwellings of colored persons were surrounded, and their inmates threatened with violence. The conduct of the mayor and the city authorities throughout this affair was utterly inefficient, and in the highest degree discreditable. Liberty, justice, and law were sacrificed by them on the altar of prejudice against race and color.

The police committee afterward sought to screen themselves from deserved reproach, in an official report, by apologizing for the atrocities of the mob and criminating the Abolitionists as the really guilty parties. The excitement, they contended, was

occasioned by the determination of the owners of the building to persevere in openly promulgating in it "doctrines repulsive to the moral sense of a large majority of our community."

That impotent report, with its false assumptions, reckless assertions, and evasive statements, only demonstrated the feebleness and imbecility of the civil authority and police force of Philadelphia, and was but a poor apology for manifest neglect of public duty. The actors themselves in those scenes of arson and brutality were generally actuated by low, vulgar, and malicious hatred of the African race; while too many of the thousands who witnessed those lawless deeds, stood by inactive, and saw the incendiary torch applied to that magnificent hall, erected and consecrated to freedom of speech, were impelled by the unmanly desire to propitiate Southern favor, the sordid greed of Southern gain, and the ignoble fear of Southern offence.



## CHAPTER XXII.

### SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE-TRADE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

The Seat of Government. — Sectional Claims. — Capital fixed on Slave Soil. — Slave Codes of Virginia and Maryland indorsed. — Inhumanity of the Slave Laws. — Jails used by Slave-traders. — Randolph's Resolution. — Speech. — Judge Morrell. — Petition of the Citizens against the Traffic. — Mr. Miner's Resolutions and Speech. — Resolutions adopted. — Committee. — Communication of the Grand Jury against the Slave-trade. — Slave-traders licensed by the City of Washington. — Men and Women whipped on their bare backs. — Laws against Free Negroes. — Responsibility of the Northern People. — Arrest, Imprisonment, and Trial of Dr. Reuben Crandall.

THE Constitution having conferred upon Congress sole jurisdiction in all cases whatsoever over a territory not exceeding ten miles square, to be ceded to the Federal government as the capital of the nation, the question of location came up toward the close of its first session. It excited the deepest interest, and the strongest sectional feelings were manifested. The Eastern States would have been content to retain the seat of government in the city of New York. Pennsylvania sought to win it back to Philadelphia. Southern members insisted upon locating it upon the Potomac. Eastern members, supported by Pennsylvania, strove to conciliate the South by a proposition to locate it on the banks of the Susquehanna; but that proposition was strenuously resisted. The House was told by even the moderate Mr. Madison that, "if that day's proceedings had been foreseen, Virginia would never have ratified the Constitution." These conflicting claims and sectional interests defeated, at that session, all propositions for the location of the national capital either on the Susquehanna, the Delaware, or the Potomac. At the next, however, a "bargain" was consummated, by which the House of Representatives, after taking the yeas and nays thirteen times, decided,

by a majority of three, in favor of the Potomac. Thus the capital of the new republic was placed on soil then and thenceforward polluted by the system of human slavery, and two generations of statesmen have thus been surrounded by the perverting and blinding influences of slaveholding society.

Instead of providing a code of humane, equal, and uniform laws for the government of the territory ceded by Maryland and Virginia, Congress enacted, on the 27th of February, 1801, that the laws of the former should be enforced on the north side and those of the latter on the south side of the Potomac. Thus the nation, by accepting and adopting as its own these cruel and revolting statutes, became guilty of the astounding inconsistency of enacting for the capital of a Christian republic, just starting on its national career, the colonial legislation of a monarchical government adopted for the control of the wild hordes from Africa which its policy had forced upon them.

In 1827 the House Committee of the District of Columbia affirmed, in a report, that "in this District, as in all slaveholding States, the legal presumption is that persons of color going at large, without any evidences of their freedom, are absconding slaves, and *prima facie* liable to all the legal provisions applicable to that class of persons." This committee further stated that in the portion of the District ceded by Virginia "a free negro may be arrested and put in jail for three months on suspicion of being a fugitive, then to be hired out to pay his jail fees; and, if he does not prove his freedom within twelve months, to be sold as a slave." And in the territory ceded by Maryland, it reported that "if a free man of color should be apprehended as a runaway, he is subjected to the payment of all fines and rewards given by law for the apprehension of runaways; and, on failure to make such payment, is liable to be sold as a slave." Thus by the act of the nation, for which the whole people were responsible, a colored citizen visiting its capital was "by legal presumption an absconding slave," and "might be apprehended as a runaway," be "subjected to the payment of fines and rewards," or be "sold as a slave for the payment of jail fees."

By a statute of Maryland, enacted in 1717, and continued in force by act of Congress, the testimony of no free negro or mulatto could be received as evidence in any matter whatever wherein any white person was concerned. This legal presumption that color was evidence of servitude, this act invalidating the testimony of persons of color, placed the property, the liberty, and the lives of free persons of color in the capital of the nation at the mercy of avaricious, violent, and abandoned white men. Every colored man whose feet pressed the soil of the District was presumed to be a slave, and his testimony afforded him no protection whatever. Greedy and grasping avarice might withhold from him the fruits of his toil, or clutch from him his little acquisitions; the brutal might visit upon him, his wife, and his children, insults, indignities, blows; the kidnapper might enter his dwelling and seize and drag his loved ones from his hearthstone; every outrage the depravity of man could invent or suggest might be perpetrated on him, his family, his race, — but his oath on the Evangelists, though his name might be written in the Book of Life, could neither protect him from wrong nor punish the wrong-doer.

These laws and ordinances, sanctioned by Congress, and for which the people of the United States were responsible, bore the legitimate fruits of injustice and inhumanity, dishonor and shame. Crimes against persons of African descent were often perpetrated in the national capital. They were seized, imprisoned, fined, and sometimes sold into perpetual servitude. The laws offered tempting bribes to the base, the selfish, and the unprincipled to become manstealers and kidnappers. These bribes converted government officials not only into slave-catchers, but also into slave manufacturers. Thousands of persons of African descent were seized and imprisoned, and the jail became a work-shop, where the sordid and cruel traffickers plied their trade in the bodies and souls of men.

The augmented value of slave labor gave increasing activity to the domestic slave-traffic, and the capital early became a great slave-mart. There grew up a race of official and unofficial man-hunters, greedy, active, dexterous; ever ready,



by falsehood, trickery, and violence, to clutch the black man who carried not with him his title to freedom.

The atrocities there perpetrated moved to indignation John Randolph, though ever vigilant in watching the interests of slave-masters and ever ready to defend the slave system. He submitted a resolution in 1816 for the appointment of a committee to consider the expediency of putting an end to the slave-trade in the District. He denounced it as a "nefarious" traffic, "in comparison with which the traffic from Africa to Jamaica is a mercy, — a virtue." He invoked the House to put a stop "to a practice not surpassed for abomination in any part of the world." "Not even upon the rivers upon the African coast," said he, "is there so great and nefarious a slave-market as in this metropolis, the very seat of government of this nation, which prides itself on freedom." He declared that there could be no comparison between taking the negro from his native wilds and "tearing the civilized negro from his friends, his wife, his children, his parents." "I have," he said, "this day heard a horrible fact from a respectable gentleman: A poor negro, by hard work and by saving his allowance, laid by money enough to purchase the freedom of his wife and child. The poor fellow died, and the next day the woman and child were sold. I was mortified at being told by a foreigner of high rank: 'You call this a land of liberty, and every day things are done in it at which the despotisms of Europe would be horror-struck.'" The resolution was adopted, the committee appointed, and Mr. Randolph was made its chairman. He presented a report stating the facts relating to the slave-trade in the District; but he failed to report a measure for the suppression, or even the regulation, of a traffic which he had in such unmeasured terms denounced.

Judge Morsell, too, of the Circuit Court of the United States, bore his testimony to the enormity of the brutal commerce. In a charge to the grand jury, he said that "the frequency with which the streets of the city have been crowded with manacled captives, sometimes on the Sabbath, could not fail to shock the feelings of all humane persons." So thought many citizens of the District; for on the 24th of March, 1828, more

than one thousand of its inhabitants presented a memorial to Congress, in which they declared that "it was not alone from the rapacity of slave-traders that the colored race in this District were doomed to suffer ; that the laws sanction and direct a procedure unparalleled in glaring injustice by anything among the governments of Christendom." This, it is to be borne in mind, was Southern testimony ; and yet, notwithstanding its unequivocal and damaging character, the nation adopted no measures to abate, or even to regulate, the terrible trade, or in any way to relieve it of its fearful hardships and horrors.

In January, 1829, Mr. Miner of Pennsylvania introduced a preamble and resolutions concerning slavery and the slave-trade in the District, setting forth the power of Congress, the responsibility of the government, the laws, and the practices that had grown up ; and he proposed that the committee on the District be instructed to inquire into the slave-trade in the District, and report such amendments to existing laws as might seem just ; and further to consider the expediency of providing for the gradual abolition of slavery itself therein. In support of his proposition, Mr. Miner made an earnest and effective speech. He declared that the slave-trade, as it existed in the capital, was "marked by instances of injustice and cruelty scarcely exceeded on the coast of Africa" ; and that it was a "mistake to suppose it a mere purchase and sale of acknowledged slaves." He stated that the extent and cruelty of the traffic, so long ago as 1802, had drawn from a grand jury in Alexandria a presentment, in which grievances were clearly set forth and legislative redress demanded. He disclosed many appalling acts of unblushing injustice and atrocity. "We feel deeply," said Mr. Miner, "for the sufferings of Ireland ; we weep for the miseries of the Greeks ; but we suffer, in a race of a different color, under our own eye and our own jurisdiction, scenes of greater cruelty and injustice than are acted on the other side of the Atlantic. We move on the surface of the stream, where the sunbeams play, and where the glittering waves sparkle with hope, joy, and pleasure ; and we pass on unconscious of the dark counter-current

that flows beneath, imbibtered by the tears and impelled by the sighs of the wretched."

Mr. Weems of Maryland opposed the adoption of the resolutions. But the resolution concerning the slave-trade was adopted by a vote of more than two to one, and even that concerning gradual emancipation received a vote equally strong. And yet, notwithstanding these decisive votes, Mr. Stevenson, a slaveholding speaker, so constructed the committee that no further action was taken upon the subject.

In 1829 the grand jury made a communication to Congress in which it was said that "the whole community would be gratified by the interference of Congress for the suppression of these receptacles and the exclusion of this disgusting traffic from the District." The "Washington Spectator," in 1830, indignantly denounced those "processions," so often seen in the streets of that city, of human beings handcuffed in pairs or chained in couples, wending their way to the slave-ships which were to bear them to the distant South; and yet this abominable traffic, denounced by judges and grand juries, citizens and presses, instead of being suppressed by Congress, was legalized two years afterward by the corporation of the city of Washington; and slave-traders were licensed, for the paltry sum of four hundred dollars, to pollute the capital of the nation with their brutalizing commerce.

Congress in 1820 had empowered the corporation of Washington to punish slaves by whipping, not exceeding forty stripes, and it was enacted that for several trifling offences men and women should be thus whipped on their bare backs. As late as 1836 the city authorities enacted that any free colored person going at large after ten o'clock at night should be locked up until morning. Under color of that burdensome and oppressive enactment, colored persons going to or returning from their callings were often seized and imprisoned. By statute, free colored persons were required to exhibit to the mayor satisfactory evidence of their title to freedom, and to enter into bonds with five securities, in the penalty of one thousand dollars, the bond to be renewed every year; and for failure a fine of twenty dollars was to be imposed, and they were to be sent to the



workhouse. It was made the duty of police constables to enter religious meetings of persons of color after the hour of ten o'clock at night, and disperse Christian men and women, even in the act of listening to the story of salvation, and of offering to their Creator the gratitude and prayers of contrite hearts.

From 1827 to 1850 the corporation of Washington and Georgetown continued to enact cruel, degrading, and indecent statutes, offending the taste, insulting the reason, and perverting the moral sense of civilized man. As these facts became known, through the persistent proclamation of the earnest men and women engaged in this new reform; and it was shown that these inhuman and outrageous statutes were not the laws of some slaveholding State, the municipal regulations of some Southern city, but of the capital of the nation, deriving all their force from congressional legislation,—large numbers of Northern citizens revolted from such voluntary complicity with anything so disgraceful, and readily lent their influence and names to the effort for the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia. Hence the petitions, and the persistency with which they were pushed, for that purpose.

Still, though there were these Northern exhibitions of interest and a growing indignation, there were constantly occurring at the capital, as well as elsewhere, illustrations of a very different character. The gross infringements by the Slave Power of the rights of whites as well as blacks, the degrading and intolerable surveillance to which the nation submitted, and the torpidity with which the people regarded these flagrant outrages, find many examples in the history of those days. Of them is the case of Dr. Reuben Crandall, brother of Miss Crandall of the Canterbury School, who went to Washington in 1835 to lecture on one of the natural sciences. He was a Christian gentleman of unblemished reputation, of scientific attainments, and deeply interested in the cause of education. While engaged in his office, he received some packages wrapped in newspapers, among which were a few copies of the "Emancipator" and "Antislavery Reporter." As he was unpacking his boxes, at the request of a gentleman present he gave him a copy of one of those publications. Having read it, the gen-

tleman left it at a neighboring store. Falling into the hands of others, it produced no little excitement. Indeed, so great was the agitation created by the unwitting circulation of the offending document, that Dr. Crandall was arrested, thrown into jail, and the fear was freely expressed by the officers that he was in danger of a mob. He was brought to trial before a United States court, ably defended, and acquitted, but not until he had lain in a common jail, charged with crime, for nearly eight months. The enormity of this outrage appears greater from the indictment under which he was tried. It contained five counts, charging him with publishing malicious and wicked libels, with the intent to excite sedition and insurrection among the slaves and colored people of the District. The evidence relied on was incorporated into the indictment in the form of extracts from these antislavery publications, found in his possession. Among them was this extract from a letter from Arthur Tappan to Mr. Gurley, secretary of the American Colonization Society: "We will not insult your understanding, sir, with any elaborate attempt to prove to you that the descendants of African parents, born in this country, have as good a claim to a residence in it as the descendants of English, German, Danish, Scotch, or Irish parents; that no man's right to freedom is suspended upon, or taken away by, his desire to remain in his native country." In another count there were extracts from another article. Among them, this: "Our plan of emancipation is simply this: to promulgate the doctrine of human rights in high places and low places, and in all places where there are human beings; to give line upon line."

Such were the charges under color of which a Christian gentleman of culture and refinement was arrested, confined, and tried in the capital of this Christian nation. What must have been the necessities of a system that could not bear the presence of a few such papers and pamphlets? What must have been the moral condition of a city that would perpetrate such an act? And what must have been the tone and temper of the nation that could, without remonstrance, permit one of its citizens to linger for weary months in a felon's cell, for having in his possession a few papers that expressed sentiments that he, and every Christian, should cherish?

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### PETITIONS AGAINST SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE-TRADE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. — DENIAL OF THE RIGHT OF PETITION.

Presentation of Antislavery Petitions. — Debate thereon. — Petitions laid on the Table. — Meeting of the XXIVth Congress. — Presentation of Antislavery Petitions. — Excited Debate. — Mr. Jarvis's Resolution. — Mr. Pinckney's Resolution. — Report of the Committee. — Petitions ordered to be laid on the Table. — Presentation of Antislavery Petitions in the Senate. — Mr. Calhoun's Motion. — Debate thereon. — Mr. Calhoun's Motion to reject Petitions defeated. — Mr. Buchanan's Motion to reject the Prayer of Petitioners adopted. — Long Debate. — Servility of Northern Members. — The South victorious.

ANTISLAVERY agitation was producing its legitimate results. The facts and statements, the reasonings and appeals, of the advocates of immediate emancipation excited the apprehensions, if not the convictions, of a portion of the people, and prompted the desire to be purged from all complicity with such outrages, such high-handed crimes against the laws of God and the claims of humanity. Estopped by the compromises of the Constitution from interfering with slavery in the States, men felt all the more anxious to rid themselves of all responsibility for its existence in the District of Columbia, over which it was admitted that Congress had "sole jurisdiction," and in which both slavery and the slave-traffic existed in its most vigorous and revolting forms.

Memorials were largely circulated, very extensively signed, and presented to Congress, invoking its action. John Quincy Adams, having been elected a member of the XXIIId Congress, presented, early in the session, fifteen memorials for the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District. He expressed, however, the hope that the subject would not be discussed in the House, and took occasion to say that he could not give his support to the prayer of the petitioners. "Slav-



ery," he said, "in the District, is of little importance"; although he admitted that its existence there was as much a violation of principle as its existence in the States and Territories. The petitions presented by Mr. Adams were referred to the Committee on the District of Columbia. Mr. Doddridge of Virginia, its chairman, promptly reported that it would be unsafe to abolish slavery under existing circumstances, and wrong to do so until Virginia and Maryland moved in the matter.

At the closing session of the XXIII<sup>d</sup> Congress John Dickson of New York presented a memorial of the American Antislavery Society, and also the petition of several hundred ladies of that State, in favor of the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia. Early in February, 1835, he addressed the House in an elaborate speech in favor of the prayer of the petitioners. He contended that neither the Old nor the New Testament, the heathen philosophy nor the Declaration of Independence, recognized differences on account of color in the rights of man. Mr. Chinn of Virginia, remarking that he did not wish to disturb the deep sympathy nor the tender mercies of the gentleman from New York, or of the fair memorialists who had made him their champion, moved to lay the whole subject on the table; and his motion was agreed to by a majority of forty.

In February Mr. Phillips of Massachusetts presented a petition from three thousand six hundred ladies of his State. Mr. Dickson presented a memorial from the mayor of Rochester and other citizens, and moved that it be laid on the table and printed. This motion brought up Mr. Johnson of Louisiana. He repudiated the interference of the Northern people with the rights and property of the South. Whenever the North, he declared with deep feeling, should procure legislation by Congress in regard to this species of property, "that moment the Union would be dissolved." Millard Fillmore, afterward President, disavowed most unequivocally, then and forever, any desire on his part to interfere with the rights, or what was termed the property, of the citizens of other States; though he was in favor of printing the memorial. Mr. Clay of Ala-

bama said this memorial was calculated to excite "the most direful calamities" in that part of the Union from which he came.

Mr. Wise of Virginia said that the District was common ground; that, if gentlemen had a right to come upon that ground with "carriages and horses," he had a right to come upon it with "his slaves," and to remain as long as he pleased. "I speak," he said, "for all as strongly as one man can speak for many — for millions — that the South will fight to the hilt against the abolition of slavery, unless the inhabitants themselves, owning slaves, shall petition for it. True Christians and philanthropists will always find their principles and the cause of humanity best subserved by being the friends of slaveholders, rather than of the slaves." The House, on motion of Mr. Archer of Virginia, by more than seventy majority, laid the whole subject on the table. During the session, however, several similar petitions were presented by John Quincy Adams.

On the assembling of the XXIVth Congress, Mr. Fairfield of Maine presented to the House petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District, remarking, however, that he did not wish to be considered as favoring the views of the petitioners. These petitions, on motion of John Y. Mason of Virginia, afterward a member of the Cabinet, and minister to France, were laid on the table by a strong vote, only thirty-one voting for their reception. A few days afterward an antislavery petition, presented by Mr. Briggs of Massachusetts, was referred without debate to the Committee on the District of Columbia. On the same day another was presented by William Jackson of the same State, for a long time thereafter a most practical and efficient worker in the cause of emancipation. Mr. Hammond of South Carolina moved that it be not received. "The large majority," he said, "by which similar petitions had been rejected, a few days ago, has been very gratifying to me and to the whole South. I had hoped that vote would satisfy gentlemen charged with such petitions of the impropriety of presenting them; but as it does not have that effect, I ask the House to put a more decided seal of reprobation on

such petitions by promptly rejecting this." The Speaker stated that he was not aware that such a motion had ever been sustained by any former action of the House. Mr. Hammond then moved that the House reject the petition. On this motion he said he did not wish to go into a discussion of the question involved, but he wished to put an end to these petitions. He could not sit there and submit to their being brought forward until the House had become callous to the consequences. In the course of the debate which sprang up on this motion, Mr. Sutherland of Pennsylvania reminded the House that it had already, on that day, that very morning, referred a memorial on this very question to the Committee on the District of Columbia. The Speaker admitted the fact, but added that "it was doubtless through inadvertence; that the members of the House did not generally hear it." Mr. Patton of Virginia then moved to reconsider the vote by which the memorial presented by Mr. Briggs was referred.

On that motion an excited debate arose. In this discussion were developed the ideas and purposes of the different parties. A very small minority sympathized with the specific prayer of the petitioners; but there were differences of opinion in the majority as to the best method of rejecting that prayer. Mr. Hunt of New York said: "Gentlemen on all sides merely differ as to the means of effecting a general and decisive end, an end they are all seeking,—to give quiet and composure on this exciting question." Substantially agreeing with the South, but still regarding the right of petition "a sacred one," he could "never consent to infringe upon it even by implication." Believing that "the quiet of the community could not be insured by suppressing information and inquiry," he would "refer this and all similar memorials to the Committee on the District of Columbia, or to some select committee, with instructions to make a report that should put this question forever at rest,—silence the fanatics on the one hand, and satisfy our brethren of the South on the other."

Mr. Thomas of Maryland defended the same course. Deprecating the repressive policy, he said: "I am prepared to



vote for the reception of the petition, and to declare distinctly that the prayer of these petitioners is unreasonable and ought not to be granted." Mr. Beardsley of New York would receive the petition, but "reject its prayer"; and then, he added, "they will see no firebrands in this House." Mr. Pierce of New Hampshire, afterward President, favored the same action for the same end, though he believed the public sentiment of the North was sound, there being "not one in five hundred who would not have these rights of our Southern brethren protected at any and every hazard." The Southern members were divided, some contending that the above was the best method of quieting agitation, others that the stamp of reprobation should be branded on all antislavery agitation by rejecting the petitions on the very threshold of Congress.

At this point of the discussion John Quincy Adams, whose name is so generally identified with this great struggle, addressed the House. Disowning all sympathy with the purpose of the petitioners, he said he would receive the petition because he deemed the right of petition "sacred, to be vindicated at all hazards; while it presents the only effective way to get this question out of the view of the nation and this House." Alluding to his former course, he said that in 1832 he presented similar petitions, though he gave notice to the House and to the country that he should not support them. "In 1834," he said, "similar petitions were presented, and referred to a committee; and from the moment they were referred they went to the tomb of the Capulets. . . . A distinguished member, Mr. Dickson, made an eloquent speech of two hours in defence. No reply was made. Not a word was said. . . . Other petitions were so referred, and then they slept the sleep of death." Mr. Adams's course on this occasion very much astonished and aggrieved the friends of freedom, and was sharply criticised by Mr. Lundy, Mr. Garrison, and other prominent advocates of the cause. They felt that, even if he had doubted the value of such efforts, he might safely have exhibited more sympathy with the ultimate purpose of the petitioners.

But there was one member who, like Mr. Dickson in the pre-

ceding Congress, distinctly and unequivocally avowed himself in favor of the prayer of the petitioners. "The petitioners," said Mr. Slade of Vermont, "wish the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia; so do I. They wish to abolish the slave-trade in the District; so do I." He was in favor of referring all antislavery petitions to a committee. The House, however, reconsidered the vote to refer the petition presented by Mr. Briggs to the Committee on the District of Columbia, and then laid it on the table by a majority of seventy-seven.

Early in January, 1836, Mr. Jarvis of Maine submitted a resolution declaring that the subject of the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia ought not to be entertained by Congress; and, if any petition praying for it should thereafter be presented, it ought to be laid on the table without being referred or printed. Mr. Jarvis was one of the most zealous of that class of Northern men who, emulous in their subserviency, seemed to court the distinction of bowing low and of making great sacrifices of principle, humanity, and personal honor to propitiate the slave oligarchy, and thereby maintain the ascendancy of the Democratic party and secure the election of Mr. Van Buren to the presidency. And thus it happened that the cause of humanity and of liberty was always imperilled as much by Northern subserviency as by Southern intolerance and exactions!

Mr. Wise pronounced the resolution "entirely evasive and unsatisfactory to the South." "Nothing," he said, "can satisfy them but a bold, direct, and manly vote." He moved to amend the resolution of Mr. Jarvis so as to declare that there was no power of legislation granted to Congress to abolish slavery in the District, and that any attempt to do so would be dangerous to the Union.

The representatives from South Carolina, like the senators from that State, were foremost in asserting the rights and powers of slaveholders. They vied with each other in support of slavery by speech and vote. Mr. Pickens pronounced their system of domestic servitude to be "the same patriarchal system that existed in the first ages of society." "Ours," he said, "is the ancient system of society that existed amongst

the Greeks and the Romans, and to a certain extent in the feudal serf system of the Gallic race." With a shameless and audacious effrontery he admitted and affirmed the "robber's right" to be the only foundation of their peculiar institution, for he specifically declared their "system to be a frank and bold one, that sustained itself by open and undisguised power." They had nothing, he said, to conceal or disguise, and he boldly avowed to the world that they owned the blacks through both "intellectual and physical force."

Mr. Hammond, too, expressed extreme views, proclaiming that the "doom of Ham has been branded on the form and features of his African descendants," and that "the hand of fate has united his color and his destiny." He made, too, the impudent and preposterous claim that "domestic slavery produces the highest-toned, the purest and best organization of society that has ever existed on the face of the earth." Avowing that their last thought would be to give up the institution under which they were born and bred, and which they would maintain or die in its defence, he said, "I warn the Abolitionists, ignorant and infatuated barbarians as they are, that, if chance shall throw any of them into our hands, they may expect a felon's death."

Mr. Pinckney, avowing that he was "for the suppression of abolition" by "procuring a direct vote and a practical result upon the whole subject of the abolition of slavery," submitted a resolution to the effect that all antislavery petitions and papers which had been or might be submitted should be referred to a select committee, with instructions to report that Congress had no power to interfere with slavery in the States, and that it ought not to interfere with slavery in the District of Columbia, because that would be a violation of the public faith, unwise, impolitic, and dangerous to the Union. This resolution was adopted, a select committee of nine members was appointed, and Mr. Pinckney was made chairman. In the formation of the committee, however, the usual courtesy was withheld, and not a member known to be in favor of the prayer of the petitioners was placed upon it. On the 18th of May, the committee made a long and elaborate report, occupying an hour and



a half in the reading. It concluded with resolutions declaring that Congress possessed no constitutional authority to interfere with slavery in the States ; that it ought not to interfere in any way with slavery in the District of Columbia ; and that "for the purpose of arresting agitation and restoring tranquillity to the public mind " all petitions or papers relating in any way to slavery should be laid on the table without being printed or referred. Upon these resolutions an earnest, furious, and protracted debate sprang up, in which hardly a word was uttered for freedom.

The most extreme representatives of slavery objected to the resolutions because they did not contain the explicit declaration that Congress possessed no constitutional power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. So demoralized had the nation become, that the resolutions requiring all antislavery petitions and papers to be laid on the table without being considered or referred were adopted by a vote of one hundred and seventeen to sixty-eight. Nearly all those who voted in the negative being Whigs from the free States held with Mr. Adams that the resolution was a direct violation of the Constitution of the United States, the rules of the House, and the rights of their constituents.

While antislavery petitions were receiving the attention of the House they were also before the Senate. Early in January Mr. Morris of Ohio presented two petitions to that body praying for the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia. Mr. Calhoun promptly objected to their reception because "one half of the Union was deeply slandered in them " ; because "the subject was not within the power of Congress " ; and because "agitation on the subject must cease." "This," he said, "is a preliminary abolition movement. These Abolitionists move first on the District of Columbia, which is the weakest point, in order to operate afterward on the States. I will resist them as firmly in this movement as I would on the direct question of emancipation." He expressed the conviction that "nothing can, nothing will stop these petitioners but a prompt and strong rejection of them."

This debate, commenced by Mr. Calhoun upon his motion

to reject antislavery petitions, was continued for more than two months. Nearly all the Southern and many of the Northern senators participated in it. Southern senators of extreme opinions agreed with Mr. Calhoun in sternly refusing to receive the petitions; others were in favor of receiving them, and instantly rejecting their prayer. A few believed it to be the constitutional duty of the Senate to receive the petitions, refer them, and have a committee report upon them.

Mr. Buchanan presented the petition of the Caln Religious Society of Friends of Pennsylvania. This memorial prayed Congress to enact such laws as would secure the freedom of every human being residing within the constitutional jurisdiction of Congress, and prohibit every species of traffic in the persons of men. Mr. Buchanan was in favor of receiving the petition, and of instantly rejecting its prayer. The test vote was taken upon this memorial. Ten senators voted for Mr. Calhoun's motion not to receive it, while thirty-five voted against it. The question then arose on Mr. Buchanan's motion to reject the prayer of the petitioners, and it was agreed to, only six voting against it. Mr. Calhoun declined to vote in favor of this "device to receive this petition and immediately reject it, without consideration or reflection." "To my mind," he said, "the movement looks like a trick,—a mere piece of artifice to juggle and deceive. I intend no disrespect to the senator. I doubt not his intention is good and believe his feelings are with us, but I must say the course he has intimated is in my opinion the worst possible for the slaveholding States. It surrenders all to the Abolitionists, and gives nothing in turn that will be of the least advantage to us." Failing to secure the rejection of the petition, his colleague, Mr. Preston, accepted Mr. Buchanan's "device," and invoked gentlemen of all parties to unite against the "hot-headed and cold-hearted," "ignorant and bloodthirsty fanatics," and to "stamp their nefarious propositions with unqualified reprobation."

During this long debate, in which a majority of the senators participated, harsh and violent utterances were made against those who had felt it to be their duty to free the national capital from the sin of slavery and the crime of slave-trading.

Mr. Buchanan denounced them as fanatics. By granting the prayer of the petitions he said they would erect a citadel from which Abolitionists and incendiaries could attack the peace and safety of the citizens of Maryland and the District of Columbia. "You create a point," he said, "from which trains of gunpowder may be securely laid, extending into the surrounding States, which may at any moment produce a fearful and destructive explosion. By passing such a law you introduce the enemy into the very bosom of these two States, and afford him every opportunity to produce a servile insurrection."

Robert J. Walker of Mississippi, afterward Secretary of the Treasury, declared the Abolitionists to be guided by the blind spirit of fanaticism. "What is this proposition," he inquired, "which we are asked to receive and consider? It is a proposition to violate the Constitution and endanger the Union. It is a proposition for rapine, plunder, and spoliation. It is a proposition, not merely to attempt to render the slaves of this District freemen, but, in its inevitable results and consequences, to attempt to render the freemen of this District slaves. The mighty revolution proposed by these petitioners would make this District a den of thieves and assassins, of liberated slaves and blacks already free. This proposition would make the District an asylum for fugitive slaves from the States, the grand citadel of Abolitionism, whence it would light the torch of the incendiary and whet the knife of the assassin. Can we, ought we, will we submit to this? No, never!"

Mr. White of Tennessee, then a candidate for the presidency, was in favor of the rejection of antislavery petitions. He referred to the arrest and whipping of Amos Dresser by the citizens of Nashville, and to the threat of the citizens of Kentucky to demolish the building and destroy the types of the "Philanthropist," established by James G. Birney, as evidences of the determined purpose of the people of the South. Mr. Benton denounced the abolition societies. He said their speeches, publications, petitions, pictures, went not to the understanding of the slaves, but to their passions, inspired vain hopes, and stimulated abortive but fatal insurrections. To the antislavery societies of France, which contained "the best



and the basest of human kind,—Lafayette and the Abbé Gregoire, those purest of philanthropists, and Murat and Anarcharis Cloots, those imps of hell in human shape,”—he ascribed the massacre of San Domingo, which wrapped in flames and drenched in blood that beautiful island. He referred to the attempted insurrection at Pointe-Coupée in Louisiana, inspired by the uprising of the slaves in San Domingo, and to the condemnation and execution of fifty of the insurgents, who were hung at intervals along the Mississippi for a hundred and fifty miles, to warn all who were honest in the three hundred and fifty affiliated antislavery societies “to at once secede from those associations that could have no other effect than to revive such tragedies in the Southern States.”

Mr. Benton warmly commended the action of the people of the Northern States, with words that carried with them, however, the strongest condemnation. “Their conduct,” he said, “is above all praise, above all thanks, above all gratitude. They have chased off the foreign emissaries, silenced the gabbling tongues of female dupes, and dispersed the assemblies, whether fanatical, visionary, or incendiary, of all that congregated to preach against evils that afflicted others, not them, and to propose remedies to aggravate the disease which they pretended to cure. They have acted with a noble spirit. They have exerted a vigor beyond all law. They have obeyed the enactments, not of the statute-book, but of the heart; and while that spirit is in the heart I care nothing for laws written in a book.”

Northern senators, instead of words of honest and indignant rebuke which such language should have received from their lips, joined in this denunciation of their own free States, and of those men and women of large intelligence and stainless lives, whose offence was their love of freedom and efforts for its promotion, as reckless fanatics and wicked incendiaries. Isaac Hill of New Hampshire expressed his abhorrence of “the doings of weak or wicked men, who were moving this abolition question at the North.” He referred to the removal of an academy at Canaan, New Hampshire, which admitted colored youth, by the citizens of that and the neighboring

town; to the escape of George Thompson, disguised in female attire and under the darkness of night, from a mob at the capital of the State, and the burning of his effigy in the public square amid discharges of artillery, as samples of the deep feeling that pervaded New Hampshire. He quoted and commended, too, the resolutions and utterances of Democratic meetings, conventions, and speakers, to show that "the South ought to be fully satisfied with the present disposition of the North."

But the most significant, degrading, not to say disgraceful, speech of that debate was made by Silas Wright. Benjamin Watkins Lee of Virginia had made perhaps the ablest speech in opposition to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, in which, referring to a work on slavery recently published by Dr. William Ellery Channing of Boston, he declared that it had filled his mind with deep sorrow, and that it had impaired his strong hope that "the intelligence and good sense of the North would be exercised to suppress this cause of mischief and agitation." Mr. Wright followed with the declaration that he should have been content to have given a silent vote, but he could not do so after reading the extracts from the publication of that distinguished clergyman. He then proceeded to declare that Dr. Channing, in the extracts which had been quoted, had shown himself "as ignorant of the opinions and feelings of the great mass of the Northern citizens as of the merits and virtues of the people of the South." Having taken issue with his opinions, he proceeded to satisfy Southern senators that the sentiments of the people of New York, on the subject of slavery, were as sound as were the sentiments of the people of the South. "I am satisfied," he said, "the general feeling of my State is the general feeling of the people of the non-slaveholding States." In proof of this general declaration he referred in detail to the Utica mob of 1835, which broke up the antislavery convention there assembled, and destroyed the antislavery press of that city. He referred boastfully to the facts that the grand jury had brought in no bills against any of the rioters, and that from the committee of twenty-five, chosen by the mob to carry out

their purposes, one man had been chosen State senator, and another had been made attorney-general of the State. "I have mentioned these facts," said Mr. Wright, "and I might mention many others of a similar character, to show that the determined feeling of resistance to these dangerous and wicked agitators in the North had already reached a point beyond law and above law."

Mr. Wright was one of the most eminent and trusted leaders of the Democratic party, the personal and political friend of Mr. Van Buren, then the Democratic candidate for the presidency, and this substantial indorsement of that violent outrage on the freedom of speech and the constitutional rights of American citizens was doubtless intended to reassure the slaveholders and to commend that candidate to the confidence and support of the South.

Amid these denunciations, these approvals of lawless violence, these humiliating surrenders of the constitutional rights of American citizens, a few senators calmly and firmly maintained the right of the people to petition, and to have their petitions received, referred, and considered. Mr. Morris of Ohio vindicated the right of the people to be heard in their petitions, and reminded senators that while the people believed they possessed that right, "no denial of it by Congress will prevent them from exercising it." Mr. Prentiss of Vermont regretted the harsh expressions which had been applied to the petitioners, and reminded senators that they had fallen into the common error of supposing that all who differed from them did so from unworthy motives, and not from honest convictions. "The petitioners," he said, "have been denounced as incendiaries; they have been charged with criminal, with treasonable intentions,—with intentions to excite a servile war and subject the whole Southern country to pillage, havoc, and devastation. With some of the persons who have signed petitions on this subject I am well acquainted. I know them to be intelligent, patriotic, highly respectable. Their propositions may be strongly stated; their argument may be bold; their illustrations may not be suited to the taste or the judgment of those whose opinions they oppose; but that all, the



whole combined, proceeds from a consciousness on their part of doing and saying what is right, I neither have nor can entertain any doubt." He closed his calm, logical, and statesmanlike speech with the expression of the opinion that slavery would cease to exist in the District.

Mr. Webster, too, was in favor of receiving these petitions and referring them to the proper committees. "To reject," he said, "the prayer of a petition at once without reference or consideration is not respectful" to those whose right it is to petition for the redress of grievances. Mr. Morris, then a Democratic member from Ohio, who had bravely vindicated the right of petition, was not present or did not vote. Webster and Davis of Massachusetts, Prentiss and Swift of Vermont, Knight of Rhode Island, and Hendricks of Indiana, all Northern Whigs, boldly and manfully maintained the right of petition by voting against that discreditable device.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### NORTHERN LEGISLATION DEMANDED.

Spirit of the Abolitionists. — Mr. Sullivan's Pamphlet. — Dr. Leonard Woods. — Mr. Hazard's Report. — Charleston Post-office rifled. — Public Meeting. — Conduct of the New York Postmaster. — Amos Kendall's Letter. — His Course. — Report of Mr. Calhoun. — Governor McDuffie's Message. — Resolutions of South Carolina Legislature. — Resolutions of Southern States. — Governor Ritner's Message. — Governor Gayle's Demand for Mr. Williams. — Message of Governor Marcy. — Governor Dorr. — Report of Mr. Stevens. — Failure to legislate. — Edward Everett. — His Readiness to shoulder a Musket to put down Insurrection. — Mr. Cambreling rebukes him. — His Response to Southern Demands. — His Message. — Referred to a Select Committee. — Resolution of Southern States. — Action of Massachusetts Antislavery Society. — Hearing before the Committee. — Speeches of Mr. May, Mr. Loring, Mr. Garrison, Mr. Goodell. — Mr. Lunt interrupts Mr. Goodell. — Dr. Follen insulted by Mr. Lunt. — Dr. Follen sustained by Mr. May. — Memorial to the Legislature. — Another Hearing. — Speakers interrupted by Mr. Lunt. — Excitement of the Audience. — Mr. Lunt's Report. — Resolutions laid on the Table.

DEEDS of violence and the reign of riot did not, however, repress agitation or crush out Abolitionists. The declaration of Charles King, son of the illustrious Rufus King, and editor of the "New York American," that "fire could not burn the convictions of these men out of them," had been clearly demonstrated. Their spirits rose as the storm of popular violence beat more fiercely on their heads. In the face of their maddened countrymen they exhibited the unconquerable spirit of devotion, courage, and martyrdom.

Other agencies were, therefore, invoked. Legislation was demanded of the national and State governments. Grand juries made presentments, and the judicial tribunals were invoked to suppress and to punish. In the summer of 1835, when mob violence was manifesting itself in every form, and the laws were defied even by gentlemen of property and stand-

ing, a pamphlet, written by William Sullivan, was published in Boston, in which the hope was expressed that "Massachusetts will enact laws declaring the printing, publishing, and circulating pamphlets on slavery, and also the holding meetings to discuss slavery and abolition, to be public, indictable offences, and to provide for the punishment thereof in such a manner as will more effectually prevent such offences." This startling proposition, put forth by a learned lawyer and gentleman of high social position, received the censure of neither the press, the pulpit, nor the people.

The "Literary and Theological Review," published in the city of New York, and edited by Leonard Woods, Jr., afterward president of Bowdoin College, affirmed that the Abolitionists were "justly liable to the highest civil penalties and ecclesiastical censures." Though the "Review" was largely supported by the Congregational and Presbyterian clergymen of the New England and Middle States, even this extreme position met with little opposition or dissent. While many, however, of those who then approved and applauded this sentiment changed their views, and adopted and defended more liberal opinions, this editor continued, even amid the subsequent developments of rebellion and civil war, to exhibit a spirit which justly subjected him to the suspicion of disloyalty to his government.

At a public meeting at Newport, Rhode Island, Mr. Hazard of that city presented resolutions in favor of legislation against the Abolitionists. At the October session of the legislature a committee was appointed, of which he was made chairman, for the purpose of reporting a bill against abolitionism, and of subjecting Abolitionists to the infliction of legal penalties. Politicians and public presses, men learned in law and divinity, gave utterance to like sentiments, and manifested their readiness to repress by laws what violence had failed to crush. Was it then a matter of surprise that Southern men should demand what so many Northern men seemed forward to proffer?

On the 29th of July, 1835, the post-office at Charleston, South Carolina, was forced open by a mob, the mails rifled,



and antislavery publications destroyed. A few days afterward a public meeting was held to complete the work already begun, by ferreting out and punishing any Abolitionists that might be found, or any persons in sympathy with them. At that meeting the clergy, of all denominations, attended in a body to give their sanction to its proceedings. Their services were gratefully acknowledged by the damaging compliment of a resolution adopted by that lawless assemblage. The postmaster took the responsibility of arresting the circulation of antislavery publications until he should receive special instructions from Washington. Other postmasters in the South immediately followed his example. The postmaster in New York proposed to the American Antislavery Society that it should voluntarily desist from attempting to send its publications by mail. It, however, promptly and peremptorily refused to yield its legal rights.

Amos Kendall was then Postmaster-General. A native of Massachusetts, he had taken up his residence in Kentucky, became connected with the press, and was distinguished for his zeal and ability in support of General Jackson, who had placed him at the head of the Post-Office Department. In his reply of the 5th of August to the postmaster of Charleston, he admitted that the Postmaster-General had "no legal authority to exclude newspapers from the mail, nor to prohibit their carriage or delivery on account of their character or tendency, real or supposed." He expressed himself, however, unprepared to direct the postmaster to deliver antislavery papers. "By no act or direction of mine, official or private," said this high official, sworn to obey the laws, "could I be induced, knowingly, to aid in giving circulation to papers of this description, directly or indirectly. We owe an obligation to the laws, but a higher one to the communities in which we live; and, if the former be permitted to destroy the latter, it is patriotism to disregard them. Entertaining these views, I cannot sanction and will not condemn the step you have taken." To Samuel L. Gouveneur, the postmaster of New York, who had consulted him in regard to suppressing antislavery papers through the mails, he replied, approving what

he had done, but declaring that he was "deterred from giving an order to exclude the whole series of antislavery publications from the Southern mails only by a want of legal power." This position of that high functionary, so indefensible and revolutionary, encouraged his subordinates to set at defiance the laws of their country, violate the sanctity of the mails, and subject their contents to the surveillance of every petty postmaster, whatever his motives or character might be.

President Jackson, in his annual message of that year, suggested to Congress "the propriety of passing such a law as will prohibit, under severe penalties, the circulation in the Southern States, through the mail, of incendiary publications intended to instigate the slaves to insurrection." This proposition was referred to a select committee, of which John C. Calhoun was chairman. On the 4th of February, 1836, this committee made an elaborate report, accompanied by a bill. In this report it was maintained that it belonged "to the States, and not to Congress, to determine what is and what is not calculated to disturb their security"; that, if Congress might decide that year what incendiary publications were, they might decide next year what they were not, and thus enforce the circulation of abolition documents. This report maintained that when the States had determined what incendiary publications were, Congress must enact a law prohibiting their transmission through the mail. By the doctrines of that report, when any State pronounced certain publications to be "incendiary" in their character, Congress and State legislatures were bound to act in conformity with its decisions. By the provisions of the act reported it was declared that it should "not be lawful for any deputy postmaster in any State, Territory, or District, knowingly to deliver to any person whatsoever any pamphlet, newspaper, handbill, or other printed paper or pictorial representation touching the subject of slavery, when by the laws of such State, Territory, or District such circulation is prohibited."

In his message to the legislature of South Carolina, in December, 1835, Governor McDuffie elaborately defended slavery as "the corner-stone of the republican edifice"; declared the

laboring population, "bleached or unbleached, a dangerous element in the body politic"; and affirmed of the Abolitionists and their measures that "the laws of any community should punish this species of interference with death without benefit of clergy." The legislature, accustomed to lead wherever slavery had a service to be performed, immediately adopted a resolution in accord with his suggestion. Presuming on what it chose to regard the justice and friendship of the non-slaveholding States to carry out such measures, it called upon them to "effectually suppress," by legislation, all abolition societies within their respective limits.

During the same month North Carolina called upon its sister States to pass penal laws against printing anything that might have a tendency to make their slaves discontented. During the next month Alabama called upon them to "enact such penal laws as will finally put an end to the malignant deeds of the Abolitionists." Virginia earnestly requested the non-slaveholding States promptly to "adopt penal enactments, or such other measures as will effectually suppress all associations within their limits purporting to be or having the character of abolition societies." Georgia, too, resolved that it was incumbent on the people of the North "to crush the traitorous designs of the Abolitionists."

By such resolutions these Southern States demanded, in effect, that the non-slaveholding States should suppress abolition societies, and make it penal to print, publish, or distribute antislavery newspapers, pamphlets, or tracts. They proclaimed, too, that they should consider the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, or any interference with slavery by any State or the general government, to be at once and under every possible circumstance resisted. Their demands were officially communicated to the governors of the several States, and by them brought to the notice of their respective legislatures. In communicating these demands Governor Ritner of Pennsylvania was the only one of the Northern chief-magistrates to resist these arrogant demands, and to defend the sacred rights of freedom of speech and of the press, thus menaced and endangered.



Governor Gayle of Alabama had already gone so far as to demand of the governor of New York that Mr. Williams, the publishing agent of the American Antislavery Society, should be surrendered to him, to be tried by the laws of Alabama on an indictment found against him by its grand jury, for publishing in the "Emancipator," in the city of New York, the sentiment that "God commands and all nature cries out that man should not be held as property. The system of making men property has plunged two and a quarter millions of our fellow-countrymen into the deepest physical and moral degradation, and they are every moment sinking deeper." Mr. Williams had never been in the State of Alabama, and of course had never fled from it; and this was distinctly admitted by the governor when he made the demand for his surrender. But this audacious demand was not complied with.

There were those who believed that the Abolitionists might be punished under existing laws; while others were ready to enact such laws as the slave-masters required. The governor and legislature of New York were Democratic. They desired the election of Mr. Van Buren to the presidency, and hence were ready to make almost any concessions to their Southern allies and friends. The legislature met early in January, 1836. Governor Marcy, in his message, affirmed that the States would not possess all the necessary means for preserving their external relations of peace among themselves "without the power to pass such laws" as were required by the Southern States. He relied, however, for the present, on the influence of public opinion which, he said, had already been manifested with unexampled energy and unanimity in striking exhibitions of popular reprobation, elicited by the just fear of "the fatal issues in which the uncurbed efforts of the Abolitionists may ultimately end." The committee to whom the subject was referred made a report, near the close of the session, in response to this declaration of the governor, in which they pledged the faith of the State to enact such laws whenever they should be deemed necessary. Early in February Mr. Hazard, chairman of the committee, appointed at the October session of the legislature of Rhode Island, reported a bill embodying provisions he had

suggested even before the demands of the Southern legislatures were made. This bill, however, was defeated, mainly by the efforts of George Curtis and Thomas W. Dorr, then representatives of the city of Providence.

Governor Ritner standing alone, as already stated, in defence of free speech and a free press, commented in language of deserved severity upon this cowardly timidity and disgraceful subserviency of Northern men, characterizing it as "the base bowing of the knee to the dark spirit of slavery." "While we admit and scrupulously respect," he said, "the constitutional rights of other States on this momentous subject, let us not, by either fear or interest, be driven from aught of that spirit of independence and veneration which has ever characterized our beloved Commonwealth. Above all, let us never yield up the right of free discussion of any evil which may arise in the land or any part of it." These noble utterances of the honest and worthy governor of Pennsylvania were penned by Thomas K. Burrows, then secretary of State, now president of an agricultural college in Centre County. In those days of Northern sycophancy the manly words honored alike the heart and head of him who penned them, as well as of him who put upon them the seal of his official sanction. In a congratulatory letter, Thaddeus Stevens compared this brave message to the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Mr. Stevens was chairman of the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives. To that committee were referred the resolutions of the Southern legislatures. Its report, unlike that of the legislative committee of Massachusetts, was brave, manly, and independent. It unequivocally denied the right of the slaveholding States to claim legislation against free discussion. "Could any other State," it affirmed, "maintain the right to claim from us such legislation, we and our citizens would be reduced to a vassalage but little less degrading than that of the slaves whose condition we assert the right to discuss." It proclaimed as a fundamental truth, never to be surrendered, that "every citizen of the non-slaveholding States has a right to think and freely to publish his thoughts on any subject of national and State policy."

This report took issue, too, with the Southern legislatures touching the power of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia and the Territories. The report closed with two resolutions, affirming that the slaveholding States alone had the right to legislate on the subject of slavery within their own limits; while Congress had the constitutional power to abolish slavery and the slave-trade within the District of Columbia, a power it was expedient for it to employ.

This attempt of Southern legislatures and compliant politicians to secure hostile legislation against the Abolitionists signally failed. Not one Northern State complied with their unreasonable and unconstitutional demands. Though executive officials counselled submission, the more popular branches of the State governments hesitated, and refused to yield. Antislavery men, who had been filled with well-grounded apprehension, took courage from these defeats. They began to realize that their endurance, courage, and constancy were impressing themselves upon the public mind. "In the dark and troubled night" through which they were passing they saw, or thought they saw, in these facts, "a star of hope" through the rifted clouds, as if a less stormy and sanguinary future was opening before them.

The zeal, activity, and uncompromising character of the Abolitionists of Massachusetts had brought upon them in an especial manner the hostility of the slave-masters and the condemnation of Northern men with Southern principles. The bold, outspoken, and unsparing criticisms of the "Liberator" upon slavery in all its forms, and upon all who countenanced that iniquity, incensed its friends and encouraged its enemies. At that time, perhaps, the most thorough and radical antislavery men in the country were found in Massachusetts, and nowhere was hostility to them more distinctly proclaimed.

Edward Everett was then governor of Massachusetts. Trained for the pulpit, he early yielded to the claims of literature and public affairs. He was a ripe and accurate scholar, a gentleman of large attainments, a brilliant and polished rhetorician, a graceful and impressive orator. He entered Con-



gress the earnest supporter of the administration of John Quincy Adams. On the 9th of March, 1826, in response to an imputation upon Northern representatives that they desired to change the basis of representation, and would refuse to suppress a servile rebellion, he took occasion to make an elaborate speech, avowing his opposition to any such purpose, and his readiness to render any aid the latter might require. "Sir," he said, "I am no soldier. My habits and education are very unmilitary; but there is no cause in which I would sooner buckle a knapsack on my back and put a musket on my shoulder than that of putting down a servile insurrection at the South." He rendered more sad and significant the tenor of such a pledge by his defence of slavery in the same speech. "The great relation of servitude," he said, "in some form or other, with greater or less departure from the theoretic equality of men, is inseparable from our nature. Domestic slavery is not, in my judgment, to be set down as an immoral and irreligious relation. It is a condition of life as well as any other to be justified by morality, religion, and international law."

These sentiments created no little surprise. Churchill C. Cambreling, a native of North Carolina, then a leading member of the House from New York, sharply and eloquently rebuked these gratuitous admissions, defences, and pledges. If he had learned, he said, in the University of Göttingen, such sentiments, instead of returning to his native land, he would have journeyed eastward, would have "followed the course of the dark-rolling Danube," "crossed the Euxine," and "laid his head upon the footstool of the Sultan, and besought him to place his feet upon the neck of the recreant citizen of a recreant republic."

Entering the gubernatorial chair with such sentiments and antecedents, it is not strange that Mr. Everett's response to these Southern demands should have been humiliating in the extreme. Though mortified and indignant, antislavery men were not, therefore, surprised to read in his annual message of that year these admissions and recommendations: "Whatever by direct and necessary operation is calculated to excite an insurrection among the slaves has been held by highly

respectable legal authority an offence against the peace of the commonwealth, which may be prosecuted as a misdemeanor at common law." And again: "The patriotism of all classes must be invoked to abstain from a discussion which, by exasperating the master, can have no other effect than to render more oppressive the condition of the slave; and which, if not abandoned, there is great reason to fear, will prove the rock on which the Union will split."

This portion of the message was referred to a joint committee of five, of which George Lunt, then a senator from the county of Essex and a resident of Newburyport, was chairman. To the same committee were also referred the communications which had been received from the legislatures of the several slaveholding States, requesting the enactment of laws making it penal for citizens of non-slaveholding States to speak or publish sentiments such as had been uttered in anti-slavery meetings and printed in antislavery tracts and newspapers. It was a dark and trying hour for the friends of the slave. Everywhere spoken against, bitterly assailed by the public press, and subjected to mob violence, they had reason to be alarmed at these demands for penal legislation. The board of managers of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society took immediate action. By their order, Rev. Samuel J. May, the corresponding secretary, addressed a letter to the legislative committee, asking permission to appear before it, and give reasons why there should be no action against the freedom of speech and of the press, or condemnatory of the Abolitionists. The request was granted, and on the 4th of March a hearing was had in the hall of the House of Representatives.

Mr. Lucas, a member of the committee, thought the gentlemen who had sought a hearing were premature in their action; that they had no reason to suppose that the committee would do anything prejudicial to them; and that they should have waited until the committee had reported. To this objection Mr. May replied that he and his associates belonged to that class of persons censured by the governor in his message, and referred to in the communications from the Southern States.

To avert any action of the legislature that might infringe upon the liberty of speech or of the press, or any legislative censures upon the Abolitionists, they had sought an interview with the committee. Mr. Lucas then remarked that it was very improper for the gentlemen of the Antislavery Society to proceed upon the supposition that the legislature would enact any laws abridging the liberty of speech and of the press, which it could not constitutionally do. To these remarks Mr. May replied that the Abolitionists did not fear the enactment of any penal laws; but they were apprehensive that condemnatory resolutions might be adopted, which they would deprecate even more than penal laws. Mr. Moseley, member of the committee from Newburyport, expressed the hope that nothing would preclude the committee from giving a hearing, as he wished for information, — desired to know what Abolitionism was, to what it was tending, and how far it went. Mr. Lucas having withdrawn his objection, Mr. May then proceeded to sketch the origin and history of the abolition movements in the United States. The antislavery societies, he said, consisted of a band of men associated together to overthrow the system of American slavery by intellectual and moral means. This position of the Abolitionists was thus presented to the committee with great accuracy and clearness by one who had been among the very earliest to accept the doctrine of immediate emancipation, and who, having been thus identified with the antislavery cause, was familiar with its origin, principles, and history.

Ellis Gray Loring followed in a well-defined, clear, and forcible argument. He denied the right of the legislature to enact penal laws, or pass votes of censure upon the doings of abolition societies. He strenuously denied, too, that the Abolitionists had done anything inconsistent with the law of nations or the Constitution of the United States. He also claimed the moral right to labor for the extirpation of slavery, or any other evil. He closed his speech with these words: "A great principle is involved in the decision of the legislature. I esteem as nothing, in comparison, our feelings or wishes as individuals. Personal interests sink into insignifi-



cance here. Sacrifice us, if you will ; but do not wound liberty through us. Care nothing for men ; but let the oppressor and his apologist, whether at the North or the South, beware of the certain defeat which attends him who is found fighting against God."

The committee was then briefly addressed by Mr. Garrison. He maintained that the Abolitionists were laboring to accomplish the very object for which the Union was formed ; and that their doctrines, if obeyed, and not too late, would save it. He declared that the alternative was presented to the people of New England either to submit to be gagged by Southern taskmasters or to labor unceasingly for the removal of slavery from the country. " We loudly boast of our free country," he said, " and of the union of these States ; yet I have no country ! As a New-Englander and as an Abolitionist, I am excluded by a bloody proscription from one half of the national territory ; and so is every man who is known to regard slavery with abhorrence. Where is our Union ? and of what value is it to me, or to any one who believes that liberty is the inalienable right of every man, independent of the color of his skin or the texture of his hair ? We cannot enjoy the privileges of the Union. The right of free and safe locomotion from one part of the land to the other is denied to us, except on peril of our lives ! They who preach that slaveholding is sin, and that immediate emancipation is the duty of every master, might as safely leap into a den of lions, or into a fiery furnace, as to go into the Southern States ! "

William Goodell reminded the committee that, as the people were not prepared to receive a law which should infringe the liberty of speech, the opposers of abolition were driven to the necessity of operating indirectly against them. He protested against any legislative censure, because it would be a usurpation of authority. The legislature was not a judicial body, and had no right to pronounce condemnation on any one. He was here interrupted by Mr. Lunt, who sharply said : " You must not indulge in such remarks, sir. We cannot sit here and permit you to instruct us as to the duties of the legislature." In spite, however, of this interruption, Mr. Goodell proceeded,

and maintained with great force that the Constitution secured to the Abolitionists the right to do all they had done or intended to do.

Professor Charles Follen had been selected by the board of managers as one of the committee to appear before the legislative committee. Born in Germany, he had joined in his youth the young men of that country in emancipating his native land from French domination. Devoted to liberty, he was driven by persecution to seek a home in the United States. Honored for his profound scholarship and beloved for his private virtues, he was made an instructor in Harvard University. On the establishment of the "Liberator" he early sought out its editor, and at great personal sacrifice took and maintained his position among the despised Abolitionists. He commenced his speech with a series of philosophical remarks upon the rights of man, the spirit and purposes of republican institutions in the United States, and maintained that liberty of speech was essential to the maintenance of the government. He alluded to the attempts to excite odium against the Abolitionists, and to the demands of Southern legislatures for the suppression of their doctrines by penal laws. He referred to the Faneuil Hall meeting of the citizens of Boston, and to its censure of the Abolitionists, which the mob regarded as a warrant for its proceedings on the 21st of October. "Now, gentlemen," he asked, "may we not reasonably anticipate that similar consequences would follow the expression by the legislature of a similar condemnation? Would not the mob again undertake to execute the informal sentence of the general court? Would it not let loose again its bloodhounds upon us?"

"Stop, sir!" exclaimed Lunt. "You may not pursue this course of remark. It is insulting to this committee, and the legislature which they represent."

Dr. Follen calmly remarked that he had not intimated, nor did he believe, that the legislature would countenance an act of violence. But Mr. Lunt curtly replied: "The committee consider the remarks you have made very improper, and cannot permit you to proceed." Dr. Follen then sat down, amid evidences of deep emotion and displeasure on

the part of the audience at this conduct of the chairman. Mr. Moseley earnestly remonstrated with Mr. Lunt; and Mr. May explicitly declared his dissatisfaction at the course pursued by the committee. He expressed his regret that the chairman had stopped Dr. Follen, and concurred entirely with that gentleman in expressing the opinion that a vote of censure by the legislature would give encouragement to such scenes of violence.

To these remarks Lunt sharply replied: "Whatever you, sir, and your associates, may think of the remarks of Dr. Follen, it is for the committee to decide whether they were proper or improper. You are not to dictate to us in what manner we shall conduct the proceedings of this examination." He told the representatives of the Antislavery Society that they had no right to claim a hearing, and that it was a matter of special favor that they had been admitted to that interview at all. Mr. May reminded the committee that the Senate Chamber was then occupied by committees listening to individuals touching the interests of moneyed institutions; that they had sought an interview on a subject infinitely greater than all the moneyed interests in the land,—the cause of freedom and humanity. To this Lunt tartly answered: "I conceive, sir, that you are here to exculpate yourselves, if you can, from the charges laid against you; and not to instruct us as to what we are to do in reference to the communications we have received from certain other States."

To this impertinent and gratuitous remark Mr. May responded: "We are not here, sir, as culprits. We do not feel like culprits, nor do we mean to act as such. We know that we are aiming to accomplish a great public good, and to avert great national evils. We feel that we are standing up before the world in the defence of high moral and religious principles,—principles the continued disregard of which must bring ruin on our country. We have come in the hope that we may do something to induce the State of Massachusetts to take a stand worthy of herself, to stand up as a bulwark that shall stay and turn back the proud waves of oppression which are rolling over the land." After consultation, Mr. May notified the committee



that they would present a remonstrance to the legislature the next day, and hoped that they might hereafter meet the committee with a better understanding of their rights.

The next day a memorial was presented to the legislature, complaining of this treatment by the committee, and asking the recognition of their right to appear and give their reasons why the legislature should not pass resolutions of condemnation against the Abolitionists. This memorial was referred to the committee, and another hearing was granted in the hall of the House of Representatives, which was thronged by gentlemen and ladies, who manifested the deepest interest in the proceedings.

Samuel E. Sewall addressed the committee against yielding to the demands of the slaveholding States, which would, he said, be to subvert the foundation of civil liberties, and make it criminal to obey the laws of God and follow the example of Jesus Christ. He maintained that, if Massachusetts were to pass the laws required of her, punishing her citizens for speaking and writing against slavery, it would not repress the opinions of Abolitionists. "Who and what," he asked, "are the men whose mouths it is proposed to stop by violence and unconstitutional laws? Men of integrity, of piety, of zeal, of perseverance, of intelligence, — men who are conscientiously devoted to their opinions, and as ready to suffer imprisonment, fines, stripes, persecutions, and death for the sake of their opinions and their consciences, as ever was any persecuted sect."

Dr. Follen maintained, with mingled mildness and firmness, the sacred rights of free discussion. The legislature, he contended, could not censure freedom of speech in the Abolitionists without preparing the way to censure it in other citizens who might for the moment be obnoxious to the majority. He expressed the opinion that the mobs which had brought so much discredit upon the country had acted under the delusion that the Abolitionists wanted to infringe the compacts of the Constitution and destroy the Union. "As a friend of liberty," he said, "I am glad to be able to look upon the popular excitement from which my friends have suffered in this light;

but when Judge Lynch has presided, I must say as I said the other day — ” “ I call you to order ! ” passionately exclaimed the chairman. “ This is not respectful to the committee.” Dr. Follen expressed his unconsciousness of saying anything disrespectful to the committee, and significantly asked if he must understand that speaking disrespectfully of mobs was speaking disrespectfully of the committee. To this inquiry Lunt replied that the allusion was improper, and could not be permitted while he occupied the chair. Mr. Moseley expressed his dissent from the decision of the chairman, saw nothing disrespectful in Dr. Follen’s remarks, and pronounced him entirely in order. The Doctor then proceeded, and closed without further interruption.

William Goodell followed in a terse, able, and eloquent speech, in which he charged upon those who promulgated the doctrines embodied in the documents from the Southern States before the committee an attempt “ to destroy the free labor of the North, and reduce our free laboring citizens to the physical and moral condition of their slaves.” He quoted the language of Mr. Leigh of Virginia, then in the Senate of the United States, and of Mr. McDuffie of South Carolina, in which they maintained, in substance, that the laboring population of no nation on earth is entitled to liberty, or capable of enjoying it. He then charged the Southern legislatures with a deep and foul conspiracy against the liberties of the free laboring people of the North. Here he was interrupted by the chairman, and told that “ he must not charge Southern States with a foul conspiracy, nor treat their public documents with disrespect.” Mr. Goodell, proceeding, quoted the language of Governor McDuffie’s message and the action of the South Carolina legislature ; and, pointing to the Southern documents lying upon the table of the committee, characterized them as fetters for Northern freemen, and asked this pregnant question : “ Mr. Chairman, are you prepared to attempt putting them on ? ”

Here Mr. Lunt cried out with great warmth, “ Stop, sir ! Sit down, sir ! The committee will hear no more of this.” Mr. Goodell firmly remarked that his duty was discharged ; that they came there as freemen, and they would go away as free-

men should. The audience had watched the proceedings with the deepest interest ; and some one exclaimed, as the voice of Mr. Goodell fell upon the ear : " Let us go quickly, lest we be made slaves ! " Mr. May appealed again to the chairman for a hearing, but the latter intimated that the committee had heard enough.

As the excited and indignant audience was retiring, Dr. Gamaliel Bradford of Plymouth County, not a member of the Antislavery Society, came forward and made an earnest appeal for liberty of speech and of the press, and of the right of private judgment. When he sat down, George Bond, a prominent merchant and a gentleman of high character and influence, asked leave to address a few words to the committee. Leave having been granted, he expressed his fears that the action of the committee would produce excitement throughout the commonwealth. " I have certainly heard nothing," he remarked, " from the gentlemen of the Antislavery Society, that called for the course that has been adopted ; and it does seem to me that the committee are too fastidious, — too hypercritical." " Be careful of what you say, sir," ejaculated Mr. Lunt. In spite of this interruption, Mr. Bond went on, and implored the committee to allow the antislavery gentlemen to say what they wished to say, although their language might not be such as to suit the committee. But the committee broke up without a formal adjournment ; and, as the chairman was retiring, Mr. Moseley, one of his own townsmen, said to him : " I am not satisfied with your course. You have been wrong from the beginning. I will not sit again on such a committee."

Many persons who witnessed the discreditable conduct of the chairman of that committee freely expressed their indignation, and from that time committed themselves to the cause of liberty, then so imperilled. Dr. William Ellery Channing, who had attended the hearing, much to the gratification of the Abolitionists, with whom he had not co-operated, approached Mr. Garrison and offered him his hand, adding expressions of sympathy and encouragement. Seth Whitmarsh, a Democratic member of the Senate from the county of Bristol ;



Robert Rantoul, Jr., a leading Democratic member of the House; and George S. Hillard, a Representative from Boston,—sharply criticised, in their places, the action of the committee.

Mr. Lunt, in his report, spoke of the demands of Southern legislatures for the enactment of penal laws for the suppression of antislavery societies, meetings, and publications, as “of the most solemn and affecting character; as appeals to our justice as men, to our sympathies as brethren, to our patriotism as citizens; to the memory of the common trials and perils of our ancestors and theirs; to all the better emotions of our nature; to our respect for the Constitution; to our regard for the laws; to our hope for the security of all those blessings which the Union and that only can preserve to us.” The committee further declared that “the right of the master to his slave is as undoubted as the right to any other property”; that “any attempt, whether direct or indirect, to deprive him of this property is a violation of the fixed laws of social policy, as well as of the ordinary rules of moral obligation”; and that “his argument that the property is his own would seem to be unanswerable.” The conduct of the Abolitionists was declared to be “not only wrong in policy, but erroneous in morals”; and the charges brought against the Abolitionists by the South were declared to be strictly applicable to them. To the report was appended a series of resolutions expressing “entire disapprobation of the doctrines avowed and the general measures pursued by such as agitate the general question of slavery.” This report and resolutions were laid upon the table and never acted upon.

This course of Mr. Lunt excited so much feeling against him in Essex County that he was not put in nomination for the Senate the next year; but he was elected to the House. Both in public and private life, however, he has persistently adhered to the position he then assumed, and all measures for emancipation and the overthrow of the Slave Power have encountered his bitter and relentless opposition. Nor during the slaveholders’ Rebellion did his tongue or pen ever meet the true demands of loyalty.

## CHAPTER XXV.

INCENDIARY PUBLICATION BILL. — ADMISSION OF ARKANSAS. —  
CONVERSION OF FREE SOIL INTO SLAVE SOIL. — ATTEMPT TO  
CENSURE MR. ADAMS. — RIGHT OF PETITION DENIED.

President Jackson's Message. — Referred to a Special Committee. — Mr. Calhoun's Report. — Incendiary Publication Bill. — Debate thereon. — Mr. Van Buren's casting Vote. — Defeat of the Bill. — Application of Arkansas for Admission into the Union. — Constitution guarantees Perpetual Slavery. — Debate on the Admission. — Mr. Adams's Amendment rejected. — Arkansas admitted. — The Boundaries of Missouri extended. — Free Soil made Slave Soil. — Success of the Slaveholders. — Second Session of the XXIVth Congress. — Presentation of Antislavery Petitions. — Presentation of a Petition by Mr. Adams purporting to come from Slaves. — Violent Scene in the House. — Mr. Patton's Motion to return the Petition to Mr. Adams. — Motion of Mr. Thompson to censure Mr. Adams. — Substitute moved by Mr. Lewis. — Angry Debate. — Mr. Adams's Defence. — Triumph of Mr. Adams. — Speech of Mr. Slade. — Violent Scene. — Caucus of Southern Members. — Adoption of Mr. Patton's Resolution. — Antislavery Papers not to be debated, printed, or read. — Subserviency of Congress.

WHEN Congress assembled in 1835, the country was deeply excited by recent events. The year had been marked by riotous demonstrations and lawless violence. Bitter animosities toward the hated and dreaded Abolitionists pervaded the South. Her people were vehement in demanding action against them by Northern legislatures and by Congress; and her representatives came to Washington fully imbued with the passions of their constituents.

President Jackson in his message invited attention to what he was pleased to call "the painful excitement in the South, produced by attempts to circulate through the mails inflammatory appeals addressed to the passions of the slaves, calculated to stimulate them to insurrection, and to produce all the horrors of a servile war." He expressed the opinion that public sentiment would check such proceedings of misguided per-

sons ; but, if it failed to do so, he thought that the non-slaveholding States would be prompt to exercise authority in suppressing such attempts. He suggested to Congress "the propriety of passing such a law as will prohibit, under severe penalty, the circulation in the Southern States, through the mail, of incendiary publications, intended to instigate the slaves to insurrection."

Mr. Calhoun moved the reference of so much of the President's message as related to the transmission of incendiary publications through the mail to a select committee. After a brief debate his motion was agreed to, and a committee of five — consisting of Calhoun, King of Georgia, Mangum of North Carolina, Linn of Missouri, and Davis of Massachusetts — was appointed. A bill was reported, accompanied by an elaborate report from the pen of Mr. Calhoun. The report was concurred in by Mangum ; but Davis, King, and Linn were prompt to declare that they did not concur in all the positions of that report. Mr. King even went so far as to characterize it as not only inconsistent with the bill, but with "the existence of the Union itself, and which, if established and carried into practice, must hastily end in its dissolution."

The report maintained that slavery in the Southern States could not be abolished without "disasters unexampled in the history of the world" ; that to destroy the existing relations would be to place the two races "in a state of conflict, which must end in the expulsion or extirpation of one or the other." It maintained, too, that social and political equality between them was impossible ; that no power on earth could overcome the difficulty ; that, without such equality, to change the present condition of the African race would be but to change the form of slavery, — would make them the slaves of society, instead of the slaves of individuals. It avowed that the slaveholding States would not quietly submit to be sacrificed, that every consideration would impel them to the most daring and desperate resistance ; and that the subversion of the relation between master and slave would be followed by convulsions, would "devastate the country, burst asunder the bonds of the



Union, and engulf in a sea of blood the institutions of the country."

The bill was taken up for consideration early in April, and its provisions explained by Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Davis of Massachusetts, a member of the committee, opposed it in a speech of great clearness and force, in which he demonstrated its unconstitutionality and insidious and dangerous character. He thought it very impolitic to pass a law that would make every citizen feel that he was restrained in his privileges in consequence of slavery. He warned gentlemen that such an act would rouse up the spirit of resentment against slavery and excite the people to oppose it. "But if you would tranquillize public feeling," he said, "I would recommend to you to keep slavery as far out of sight and hearing as possible, and never call on the public to make sacrifices of their rights and privileges to sustain it."

Mr. King, who dissented from the reasoning of the report, gave his support to the bill; but, in doing so, imputed to Mr. Calhoun motives of action growing out of his relations with President Jackson. After vindicating his motives and explaining his actions, Mr. Calhoun avowed that the refusal of Congress to pass his bill would be virtually to co-operate with the Abolitionists, and would make the officers of the Post-Office Department their agents in the circulation of incendiary publications. He warned Congress that by the refusal to pass the bill it would clearly enlist on the side of the Abolitionists against the Southern States, and that the South would have nothing to hope from them, let their decision be what it might. The South never would, he said, abandon the principles of the bill, but would resort to "State interposition as the rightful remedy." He maintained that in "this well-tested and efficient remedy, sustained by the principles developed in the report and asserted in this bill, the slaveholding States have an ample protection. Let it be fixed, let it be riveted in every Southern mind, that the laws of the slaveholding States for the protection of their domestic institutions are paramount to the laws of the general government in regulations of commerce and the mail, and that the latter must yield to the former in the event of conflict;

and that, if the government should refuse to yield, the States have a right to interpose, and we are safe. With these principles, nothing but concert would be wanting to bid defiance to the movements of the Abolitionists, whether at home or abroad, and to place our domestic institutions, and, with them, our security and peace, under our own protection and beyond the reach of danger."

Mr. Benton would not make the United States a packhorse for the Abolitionists; but he could not vote to invest ten thousand postmasters with such authority, even to suppress abolition publications. Mr. Webster spoke at length against the passage of a bill which he deemed contrary to that provision of the Constitution which prohibits Congress from passing any law abridging the freedom of speech or of the press. Mr. Clay, too, opposed the passage of the bill, which he declared to be of "a most dangerous tendency." He avowed that it was calculated to destroy all the landmarks of the Constitution, establish a precedent for dangerous legislation, and lead to incalculable mischief; and he distinctly announced that from the first to the last he was opposed to the measure. Mr. Buchanan gave his support to the measure, maintaining that it was in conformity with the President's recommendation, and was demanded by the necessities of the country. Other senators participated in the debate, which ran through several weeks.

On the engrossment of the bill, Mr. Calhoun demanded the yeas and nays. Eighteen senators voted for it, and eighteen against it. Vice-President Van Buren was then a candidate for the presidency. When the vote was taken on the engrossment he was walking in the space in the rear of the chair of the presiding officer. Mr. Calhoun called for the Vice-President, and Mr. Van Buren promptly took the chair and gave his casting vote in favor of the bill. Mr. Wright and Mr. Tallmadge of New York, political friends of Mr. Van Buren, voted for that extraordinary measure. After further debate, the final vote was taken on the passage of the bill, and it was rejected by a vote of nineteen to twenty-five. Mr. Benton, Mr. Clay, Mr. Crittenden, and four other Southern

senators, voted against this measure, which received the support of Van Buren, Wright, and Buchanan. These Northern statesmen were unquestionably actuated by policy rather than by principle. In so acting they recognized the controlling influence of slavery and bowed to its dominant behest.

The Territories of Arkansas and Michigan applied to Congress for enabling acts, but Congress neglected or refused their application. The people of these Territories, failing to obtain authority to hold conventions, had framed State constitutions, and in the winter of 1836 asked admission into the Union. A bill for the admission of Michigan was reported by Mr. Benton, and another for the admission of Arkansas was reported by Mr. Buchanan. One was a free State, the other a slave State. It was the purpose of the supporters of the administration that they should go through together, so as to keep up the equilibrium between the free and the slave States.

Mr. Morris of Ohio, believing slavery to be wrong in principle and mischievous in practice, said he would vote against the admission of Arkansas, if he thought he had the right to do so. But he considered that his political obligations and the duties he owed to the Constitution required him to vote for its admission. Holding such views, he announced that he could not refuse his vote, though the constitution of that State did recognize the existence of slavery. On the other hand, Mr. Swift of Vermont declared that as he found by the constitution of Arkansas that slavery was made perpetual, he could never give his assent to her admission.

The bills for the admission of Arkansas and Michigan were promptly passed by the Senate, with slight opposition. In the House, after a brief debate, they were committed to the committee of the whole, and on the 9th of June a struggle commenced which continued twenty-five hours. Several members participated in the debate. The constitution of Arkansas provided that the general assembly should have no power to pass laws for the emancipation of slaves without the consent of the owners, or laws to prevent immigrants from bringing slaves with them. Mr. Adams moved to amend the bill so as to declare that nothing in the act should be construed as an assent



by Congress to the articles of the constitution relating to slavery and the emancipation of slaves. Mr. Adams held that Arkansas had a right to come into the Union "with her slaves and her slave laws." "It is written," he said, "in the bond; and, however I may lament that it ever was so written, I must faithfully perform the obligations. I am content to receive her as one of the slaveholding States of the Union; but I am unwilling that Congress, in accepting her constitution, should even be under the imputation of assenting to an article in the constitution of a State which withholds from its legislature the power to give freedom to the slave."

During the debate which followed, Mr. Wise inquired of Mr. Adams whether, if his amendment should be adopted, Arkansas would be admitted by the bill as a State. To this inquiry Mr. Adams replied: "Certainly, sir; there is not in my amendment the shadow of a restriction proposed upon the State. It leaves the State, like all the rest, to regulate the subject of slavery within herself by her own laws."

Declaring that upon the subject he could not go "the breadth of a hair" beyond the obligations imposed upon him by the Constitution, Mr. Briggs of Massachusetts emphatically avowed that he could not give his sanction to the constitution of Arkansas, which doomed a large portion of her present and future population to unconditional and interminable slavery; nor could he betray his own sense of propriety, or be treacherous to the freemen who sent him there.

During that excited and disorderly debate, Mr. Wise of Virginia announced that, as a Southern man, he felt it his duty to take a stand in behalf of slavery, which he dignified as an institution of the South. He announced that, if the members from the North sought to impose restrictions upon slavery, the men of the South might be impelled to introduce slavery in the heart of the North.

To this menace Mr. Cushing of Massachusetts, after expressing the hope that it was not a deliberate and cherished purpose, but a hasty thought struck out in the ardor of debate, thus eloquently replied: "To introduce slavery into the heart of the North! Vain idea! Invasion, pestilence, civil war, may

conspire to exterminate the eight millions of free spirits who now dwell there. This, in the long lapse of ages incalculable, is possible to happen. You may raze to the earth the thronged cities, the industrious villages, the peaceful hamlets of the North. You may lay waste its fertile valleys and verdant hillsides. You may plant its very soil with salt, and consign it to everlasting desolation. You may transform its beautiful fields into a desert as bare as the black face of the sands of Sahara. You may reach the realization of the infernal boast with which Attila the Hun marched his barbaric hosts into Italy, demolishing whatever there is of civilization or prosperity in the happy dwellings of the North, and reducing their very substance to powder, so that a squadron of cavalry shall gallop over the site of populous cities, unimpeded as the wild steeds on the savannas of the West. All this you may do ; it is within the bounds of physical possibility. But I solemnly assure every gentleman within the sound of my voice, I proclaim to the country and to the world, that until all this be fully accomplished to the uttermost extremity of the letter you cannot, you shall not, introduce slavery into the heart of the North."

The amendment of Mr. Adams received but thirty-two votes. Fifty members only voted against the admission of Arkansas ; and most of their votes were cast not on account of the cruel provision of her constitution, dooming her slaves to hopeless and perpetual servitude, but for other reasons, personal, political, or prudential. Indeed it is to be feared that very few were governed in their votes by the fixed and unalterable purpose of opposing a provision so abhorrent to human nature, the doctrines of liberty, and the precepts of Christianity.

Nor was this the only victory of the Slave Power at this session. To extend the boundaries of slavery, the Missouri Compromise line was changed, so as to give to Missouri a free territory, lying between the line of that State and the Missouri River, large enough to form seven counties. Under the persuasive influences of the delegation from that State, John M. Clayton, from the Committee on the Judiciary, reported a bill giving that fertile territory, larger than the States of Delaware

and Rhode Island combined, to Missouri. It passed both Houses with hardly any opposition. This territory was not only free, but it had been recently assigned by treaty to the Sac and Fox Indians. A new treaty with these tribes was negotiated and ratified, the Indians were removed from the coveted territory, and the slaveholders entered with their bondmen. From this territory, given to slavery in 1836, went forth the hordes of border-ruffians that overran Kansas twenty years afterward, seeking by fraud and violence to plant slavery west of the Missouri River.

But violent and repressive measures did not avail ; they did not check, they did but increase, the agitation of that period. Something more potent than laying abolition petitions on the table without debate, without being printed or referred, was necessary to arrest the action of the men and women who acknowledged the guilt of any responsibility for the existence and preservation of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia. Consequently, at the second session of the XXIVth Congress, a large number of petitions were presented praying for their abolition. But the House, under the lead of Mr. Hawes of Kentucky, voted again, by a large majority, that such petitions should be laid upon the table without being printed or referred.

But Mr. Adams, in the persistent prosecution of his avowed policy of presenting petitions whether he approved of their purpose or not, stated to the presiding officer in February that he had in his possession a paper upon which he desired his decision. It came from persons declaring themselves to be slaves, and he wished to know whether it would be considered as coming under the rule of the House. The speaker said it was a novel case, which he would submit to the House for its decision. This became the occasion of a heated and characteristic discussion. Mr. Lawler of Alabama objected to its going to the table. Mr. Lewis of the same State contended that the slaveholding representatives ought to demand of the House the full exercise of its power to punish any member who should offer such a petition. If this was not done, and that promptly, he contended that the members from the slavehold-



ing States should immediately in a body leave the House and return to their constituents. Mr. Grantland of Georgia avowed his willingness not only to second the motion for the punishment of the offender, but to go all length in securing its infliction ; and Mr. Alford of the same State was prepared to move that the paper should be burned.

Mr. Patton of Virginia said that he had examined the petition, which purported to have come from nine women of Fredericksburg, in his State. He stated, upon his responsibility as a man, that he could find the name of no woman of decent respectability of that town upon the paper. He recognized among them one name only, and that of a mulatto woman of notoriously infamous character and reputation. The rules being suspended, he moved that the petition be taken from the table and returned to the gentleman who presented it.

Mr. Thompson of South Carolina moved an amendment, that Mr. Adams had been guilty of a gross disrespect to the House in presenting a petition purporting to come from slaves, and that he be instantly brought to the bar of the House to receive the severe censure of the Speaker. This motion of Mr. Thompson received some significance from the fact that he was a Whig, revealing, as it did, the anxiety of the leading politicians of that party to stand well with the South. At the same time it afforded a fair illustration of the mode by which the leaders of the Slave Power were enabled to control the two national parties, as, by thus pitting them against each other, they generally gained their support to their most extreme and aggressive measures. Mr. Thompson also gave utterance to the most ultra sentiments on the subject of slavery ; saying that he was thankful and proud that he was born an American, a slaveholder, and a South-Carolinian. He also expressed the opinion that African slavery, in all its bearings, was a blessing.

Mr. Haynes of Georgia expressed his great astonishment that a member of the House could be guilty of so great an outrage upon the dignity of that body. Mr. Granger of New York, a prominent and influential Whig, was the first member from the free States to define his position. He did it by ex-

pressing his surprise at Mr. Adams's course, and by informing the House that he was opposed to the abolition of slavery in the District so long as it remained in Maryland. Mr. Lewis then presented a substitute for Mr. Thompson's resolution, declaring that, by his attempt to introduce a petition from slaves "praying for the abolition of slavery in the District," Mr. Adams had committed an outrage on the rights and dignity of a portion of the people, a flagrant contempt of the dignity of the House, and, by proposing to extend to slaves a privilege belonging to white people only, he had "invited the slave population of the South to insurrection." Mr. Thompson accepted the substitute.

During these violent proceedings and exhibitions of wrath Mr. Adams remained calm, simply remarking, at that stage of the proceedings, to Mr. Lewis, that he should be more careful of his facts, inasmuch as this was a petition against, and not for, abolition in the District. This quiet rejoinder greatly nettled the Southern members, and Mr. Thompson at once presented a modification of the resolution, to the effect that Mr. Adams, by creating the impression that the petition was for the abolition of slavery, when he knew it was not, had trifled with the House. Deprecating the "levity which was attempted to be thrown upon the subject," he inquired: "Is it a mere trifle to hoax members from the South? to irritate almost to madness the entire delegation from the slave States?" To these fierce interrogatories Mr. Adams, without rising from his seat, replied that he hoped he should "not be held responsible for all the follies of Southern members."

Mr. Mann, a Democratic representative from New York, took the occasion to define his position. Deprecating Mr. Adams's course, he avowed, for himself, constituents, and friends, that they would abide by the compromises of the Constitution and "live up to the contract;" and Mr. Cambrelling, from the same State, pronounced the "petition a hoax," "probably better understood by the gentleman from Massachusetts than by his assailants."

During three days of excitement and invective Mr. Adams had remained quiet in his seat, not even taking notes of what

had been so fiercely and acrimoniously charged against him. After the storm had somewhat subsided, he rose to reply, and received that profound attention which was due to his age, experience, and position. He said, if it had been a petition of slaves for the abolition of slavery he should have at least paused before he brought the subject before the House in any form. However sacred he might hold the right of petition, he would still exercise a discretionary power in bringing before the House petitions which, in his opinion, ought not to be presented. The mere circumstance, however, of a petition being from a slave would not prevent him from presenting it. If a horse or a dog had the power of speech, or of writing, and should send him a petition, he would present it to the House. A petition was a prayer, a supplication to a superior being, — that which is offered to our God. He declared that the framers of the Constitution would have repudiated the idea that they were giving the people the right of petition. "That right," he affirmed, "God gave to the whole human race when he made man. My doctrine is that the right of petition is the right of prayer, not depending on the condition of the petitioner."

Mr. Adams said that Mr. Patton made no objection when he presented a petition from women of infamous character; but he did object when they came from colored people. He had presented petitions from ladies as eminently entitled to be called such as any aristocrats in the land; but he had usually called them "women," and that, said he, to my heart, is a dearer appellation than ladies. Mr. Thompson had said there was such an institution in Washington as a grand jury, and had intimated that Mr. Adams might be indicted for stirring up insurrection. To this menace Mr. Adams replied: "The only answer I make to such a threat from that gentleman is to invite him, when he returns home to his constituents, to study a little the first principles of liberty. That gentleman appears here as the representative of slaveholders, and I should like to be informed how many there are of such representatives on this floor who indorse the sentiment involved in that menace."

These pointed and telling questions brought forth such answers as the more reflecting Southern minds saw to be neces-



sary to relieve themselves and their section from the false position in which Mr. Thompson's incautious remarks had placed them. Mr. Underwood of Kentucky promptly replied that he did not indorse it. Mr. Wise asked if any man from the South did indorse it. He was sure he did not. Mr. Thompson, seeing the dilemma in which he had placed himself, said he referred to the laws of South Carolina, by which a member was liable to indictment who should present such a petition.

Mr. Adams, with deep earnestness and amid great sensation, exclaimed, that, if that was the law of South Carolina, and members of her legislature were amenable to petit and grand juries for words spoken in debate, "God Almighty receive my thanks that I am not a citizen of that State!" He closed by an appeal to the House and to the nation, affirming that it was not he, but those who objected to the discharge of his duty, who were answerable for the consumption of time. This heroic speech of "the old man eloquent" produced a profound impression, and the resolutions of censure were rejected by a large majority; though a resolution, introduced by Mr. Taylor of New York, that slaves do not possess the right of petition, secured to the people of the United States, was adopted by an almost unanimous vote, only eighteen voting against it.

While Mr. Adams encountered such fierce invective and opposition from Southern men and their Northern sympathizers, there were those who stood by him and gave him both countenance and support. Mr. Lincoln, from his own State, took his place by his side, and avowed that he had cheerfully and willingly presented antislavery memorials, and that he intended to do so. Although not an Abolitionist, he vindicated the purity and philanthropic spirit of petitioners for the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade at the capital. Caleb Cushing, from the same State, maintained with great ability that the right of petition was not a right derived from the Constitution, but a pre-existing right of man, secured by a direct prohibition in the Constitution to pass any law to impair or abridge it. Mr. Evans of Maine also defended Mr. Adams, and vindicated the right of petition.

William Slade of Vermont had been a member of the

XXIVth Congress, and had stood firmly by the side of Mr. Adams in his devoted advocacy of the right of petition. Loathing slavery and the slave-trade, he was in favor of their suppression in the District of Columbia. Detesting the arrogant assumption of their champions, he was for freedom of speech and action. The legislature of his State had passed resolutions in favor of the suppression of the slave traffic, and of the abolition of slavery in the national capital. In presenting them and the memorials of many citizens of his State, he moved their reference to a select committee, with instructions to report a bill for their abolition and suppression. Proceeding to state the reasons for his motion, he was interrupted by Mr. Legaré of South Carolina, one of the ablest, fairest, and most learned of his class. He urged Mr. Slade to ponder well his course before he proceeded further; and he warned him that when the question was forced upon the people of the South they would be ready to take up the gauntlet.

Mr. Slade, unmindful of the interruptions and warnings of the representative of South Carolina, continued his remarks. When he was asked by Mr. Dawson, a Whig representative from Georgia, to yield the floor for an adjournment, he firmly declined. Continuing his remarks, he was called to order by Mr. Wise for reading a judicial decision of one of the Southern courts defining a slave to be a chattel. The Speaker, Mr. Polk of Tennessee, always a willing instrument of the Slave Power, decided that it was not in order to discuss slavery in the States. Mr. Slade denied that he was discussing Slavery in the Southern States, as he was simply quoting a judicial decision of a Southern court, just as he might quote a legal opinion delivered in England. The Speaker, reminding him of the excitement pervading the House, suggested that he should confine himself strictly to the subject of his motion.

Quoting the Declaration of Independence and the bill of rights of several of the States, he was again called to order by Mr. Wise for reading papers without leave of the House. Mr. Wise declared that he had "wantonly discussed the abstract question of slavery"; that he was "examining the State constitutions, to show that, as it existed in the States, it was against

them and against the laws of God and man. This was out of order." Mr. Slade, proceeding to read the memorial of Dr. Franklin and an opinion of Mr. Madison on slavery, was again called to order by Mr. Griffin of South Carolina. The Speaker decided that they could not be read without the permission of the House. Mr. Slade then proposed to send the papers to the Clerk to be read, when the Speaker decided that it would not be in order for the Clerk to read them.

Mr. Slade, proceeding, referred to the feeling in Virginia on the subject of slavery when the government was organized. But he was interrupted by Mr. Rhett of South Carolina, who impertinently inquired what the opinions in Virginia fifty years ago had to do with slavery in the District of Columbia. Mr. Wise rose under great excitement. He said that Mr. Slade had "discussed the whole abstract question of slavery, — of slavery in Virginia, of slavery in my own district; and I now ask all my colleagues to retire with me from this hall." Mr. Slade reminded the Speaker that he had not yielded the floor. Mr. Halsey of Georgia then called on the delegation from Georgia to withdraw with him. Amid this scene of excitement, noise, and confusion, the voice of Mr. Rhett was heard calling upon the entire delegation from all the slaveholding States to retire from the hall, and to meet in the room of the Committee on the District of Columbia. Mr. McKay of North Carolina, a leading member of the Democratic party, objected to Mr. Slade's proceeding any further, and demanded the enforcement of the rule requiring a member, when called to order, to take his seat; and, if decided to be out of order, requiring leave of the House before speaking again. Mr. Slade asked leave to proceed. Pending the question of granting leave, the House, on motion of Mr. Rencher of North Carolina, adjourned; sixty-three members, mostly Northern Whigs, voting against the motion.

On the announcement of the adjournment, Mr. Campbell of South Carolina said he had "been appointed as one of the Southern delegation to invite gentlemen representing slaveholding States to attend a meeting now being held in the room of the Committee on the District of Columbia." At this meet-



ing members from the slaveholding States agreed to a resolution to silence debate ; and it was placed in the hands of Mr. Patton of Virginia to be offered as an amendment of the rules at the opening of the House the next day. The resolution was submitted by Mr. Patton and read ; and the House, by a vote of one hundred and thirty-five to sixty, suspended the rules for its reception. Mr. Patton, the organ of the seceding slaveholding members, asserted that the resolution involved " a concession, — a concession which we make for the sake of peace, harmony, and union." He then moved the previous question upon the adoption of this resolution : " That all petitions, memorials, and papers touching the abolition of slavery, or the buying, selling, or transferring slaves, in any State, or District, or Territory of the United States, be laid on the table without being debated, printed, read, or referred, and that no action be taken thereon."

The previous question being sustained, the resolution was adopted, more than two thirds of the House voting for it. The Southern members of both parties and the Northern Democrats recorded their votes for it, though the Whigs of the free States voted against it.

Thus was a member of the House of Representatives, in the exercise of an unquestionable right, silenced by trickery and violence. By this revolutionary act did its slaveholding members, unmindful of their oath of office, secede from it, go into a sectional conclave, and there concoct a resolution, to be offered for the support of the House, as a condition precedent of their return to the performance of their sworn duties ; thereby abridging and practically denying the sacred right of petition, and suppressing the freedom of debate. They were aided, too, in passing this resolution, by more than fifty of the Northern Democrats. Mr. Adams thus characterized this action amid deafening cries of " Order" : " I consider this resolution a violation of the Constitution of the United States, of the right of my constituents and of the people of the United States to petition, and of every right to freedom of speech, as a member of this House."

The XXVth Congress was still more subservient to the

demands of the Slave Power. It voted not only to silence the voice of the people, but its own. It struck down the sacred right of the people to petition for the redress of their grievances, by clamor, menace, and resolution, destroyed the freedom of debate, and hushed the voice of the representatives of the people. The Democratic party had elected Mr. Van Buren President, and had secured a decisive majority in that Congress. By the most abject surrender to the demands of the slaveholding interests did the President justify the appellation generally applied to him as "a Northern man with Southern principles"; and his administration, thus begun, was among the most unhesitating in its subserviency to the Slave Power.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### ACTIVITY OF THE ABOLITIONISTS. — ACTION OF NORTHERN LEGISLATURES.

The Abolitionists hopeful. — Meeting of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society in the Capitol. — Mr. Stanton's Resolutions. — Public Sentiment. — Formation of the Illinois Antislavery Society. — Black Laws of Ohio. — Condition of the Colored People in Ohio. — Hearing before a Committee of the Massachusetts Legislature. — Mr. Stanton's Speech. — Action of the Legislature. — Decision of Judge Shaw. — James C. Alvord. — Resolutions against Texas. — Legislatures of Connecticut and Vermont.

Two features of the early stages of the uprising against slavery were peculiarly striking and suggestive. There was the manifest failure of those early pioneers to comprehend the magnitude and inveteracy of the evil to be removed, or the tremendous grasp in which it held the nation in its every department of individual and associated life. There was, too, an enthusiastic but unwarranted confidence in a speedy triumph. Evidences abound. They are seen in the proceedings of antislavery conventions and anniversaries, in the antislavery reports, speeches, and journals, of those days. Even Mr. Garrison, whose abilities and opportunities of judging were certainly not small, shared largely in these illusions of hope and in this evident under-estimate of the greatness and severity of the contest on which they had entered. Though much be conceded to the charm of novelty, the enthusiasm of youth, and the pardonable confidence of the neophyte, unhackneyed as yet and without the lessons gained in the stern school of experience, it is difficult to account for these over-sanguine expressions. Especially does this appear in view of the determined opposition they were obliged to encounter, almost always and everywhere, in their attempts to reach the popular ear and heart. Not only were they excluded, as they com-



plainly asserted, from churches and halls, but they were driven by rioters from their own quarters, and hardly permitted to walk the streets without the hootings and sometimes the more personal and physical violence of the mob. Nor was this the mere temporary ebullition of the hour. It continued until no inconsiderable number of those early and sanguine men and women felt constrained to come out of both churches and parties, as hopelessly in bondage to this haughty and dominating power of the land.

Doubtless it was well that such was the fact. Had they fully comprehended the desperate nature of the struggle, fathomed the depth of their country's degradation and peril, gauged the full measure of its apostasy and the slow progress of truth, had they known the extent of the great and terrible wilderness on which they had entered, and the length of their journeyings to the promised land, the hearts of many would have sunk within them, and they might have relinquished the attempt before it was well begun.

During the years of 1834-35 the operations of the New England Antislavery Society, which had, owing to the formation of the American Society, taken the name and become the Massachusetts Antislavery Society, were conducted on a more extended scale than ever. It employed efficient agents, while several other gentlemen of capacity, zeal, and eloquence largely contributed to the advancement of the cause. Its fourth annual meeting was held in January, 1836, in the city of Boston. Its committee of arrangements had been refused the use of all the churches and halls large enough to accommodate its members; and they were compelled to hold the meeting in their little room in Washington Street, used for ordinary purposes, for the meetings of the executive committee, and for other assemblages during the year. Earnest and radical antislavery speeches were made by Professor Charles Follen, William Goodell, Rev. Cyrus P. Grosvenor, Rev. Orange Scott, Henry C. Wright, and others.

Its fifth anniversary was held in January, 1837, in the loft of the stable attached to the Marlborough Hotel. Its report, which was very elaborate, was read by Mr. Garrison. The

meeting was addressed by Amos Dresser, who gave a narrative of the cruel treatment he had received in Tennessee, the recital of which excited deep and tearful emotion. Rev. Samuel J. May eloquently referred to the fact that the Society could not secure a comfortable place of meeting in his native city; that every church and hall had been closed against them, and that they were driven into a stable. The legislature had been applied to for the use of the hall of the House of Representatives for an evening meeting of the Society; and its application had been successful, the members from Boston, however, generally voting against it. Referring to this fact, Henry B. Stanton wittily said: "When Boston votes we go into a stable, but when the State votes we go into the State House."

On the evening of the 25th of January, the pioneer antislavery society, as its friends affectionately styled it, assembled, for the first time, in the hall of the House of Representatives. Rev. Orange Scott was the first speaker. He maintained that the sum and substance of antislavery doctrines are that "slavery is sin and must be immediately abandoned." Mr. Stanton spoke in support of resolutions in favor of the immediate abolition of slavery and of the slave-trade in the District of Columbia, and of the right of petition. While he was speaking an effort was made to create a disturbance by persons near the entrance of the hall. But Mr. Stanton, after a moment's pause, proceeded in his speech with great eloquence and power, completely subduing the mob spirit and enchainning the attention of the audience. The reporter failed in his task, because, as he said, "he would not attempt to report a whirlwind or a thunder-storm." Ellis Gray Loring made a learned argument in support of a resolution, declaring that allegiance to his country, to liberty, and to God required that every man should be an abolitionist and should openly espouse the antislavery cause.

The debate on granting the use of the hall to the society, in which several members participated, and in which Mr. Rugles of Fall River spoke with commanding eloquence and power for the right of free discussion, and the speeches made

during the evening, exerted a potent influence on the members of the legislature, the effects of which were manifested before the close of the session. The society continued its meeting during the next day, and speeches breathing the spirit of self-consecration and devotion to the cause were made. It was especially manifested in the speech of Rev. Mr. Root of Dover, New Hampshire. "The great moral war," he said, "is but begun. The collision of truth with error, of duty with expediency, will produce commotion; but truth and duty must and will prevail. Should my name reach the next generation, let it be found in connection with abolition. I would sooner be execrated as a Tory of the Revolution than be known hereafter as one who stood aloof from the movements now in progress for laying the last stone of the yet unfinished Temple of Liberty. But above all, when I am summoned to judgment, let me then be found to have been the unflinching friend of God's poor."

Mr. May commenced with great plainness of speech upon the fact that in the city of Boston the cause of impartial liberty was shut out from all the halls and churches under the control of its citizens. He referred to the fact that the colored and other citizens of Massachusetts suffered serious abridgment of their privileges, that slaveholders might not be disturbed in their unrighteousness. He maintained, too, that the citizens of New England were implicated in the sin of slavery, and were forbidden to repent and do works meet for repentance. He avowed his readiness to wear the chain himself, rather than remain silent in view of the great wrongs man was inflicting on his fellow.

Mr. Garrison, referring to the accusation made against him of using harsh language, declared that he was not eager to repel that accusation, for he could not suffer himself to be turned aside from the warfare against merciless oppressors to discuss the proprieties of diction with captious critics. "Who," he asked, "are my accusers? The entire South, reeking with pollution and blood, — slaveholders, slave-dealers, slave-drivers, recreant priests, and lynch committees, Northern apologists for crime, and terror-stricken recreants



to liberty, — all charge me with using hard language ! Am I to give heed to such instructors, or aim to suit their tastes ? While millions are groaning in bondage, and women are sold by the pound in our country, it is solemn trifling to think of sitting down coolly to criticise the phraseology of those who are pleading and toiling for their deliverance.”

Resolutions were introduced by Mr. Stanton censuring the action of members of Congress who had voted to deny the right of petition ; applauding John Quincy Adams ; calling upon the whole people of the Commonwealth to rally to the rescue of the Constitution and to the cause of God’s perishing poor ; invoking the legislature to request their representatives to vote for the immediate abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia ; and summoning the people to vote for no member of the national or State legislature who is not in favor of the freedom of speech and of the press, and of the right of petition. He declared that the resolutions were not designed to have a partisan bearing ; but that they spoke of the duties, not of a party, but of all parties and creeds.

Rev. Robert B. Hall approved of all the resolutions but the last. That he opposed because he deprecated political action, which would, he thought, excite much clamor and do much harm. Mr. Garrison expressed much surprise at such sentiments from one of the original signers of the declaration adopted by the convention at Philadelphia, in which it was expressly proclaimed that Abolitionists were to use “moral and political action” for the removal of slavery. He avowed that Abolitionists ought not to vote for any man who would not maintain the right of petition and vote for the abolition of slavery when Congress had the power. Abolitionists, he maintained, had nothing to do with politics, as understood among politicians and political parties of the day ; but “they have something to do with politics so far as relates to this question.”

Mr. Stanton proclaimed that the motto of Abolitionists is : “Duty is ours, — consequences are God’s.” Political action, he contended, was then bad, and would be, though Abolitionists should remain silent. “Shall the people,” he asked, “so

act as to renovate the politics of this country, and thus save our liberties ; or shall they slumber on until they have passed away forever?" The resolutions were unanimously passed, with the exception of the last, and that passed with only the dissenting vote of Mr. Hall. That vote fully and unreservedly committed the members of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society to political action for the removal of slavery where Congress possessed the power under the Constitution of the United States, and is very significant, especially as viewed in connection with the opposite non-voting policy so loudly and so persistently proclaimed afterward by the same individuals.

Nor were there wanting similar demonstrations in the other New England States, though in none were they so vigorous and well sustained. Still in all these were societies and active efforts more or less effective ; and this was specially true of New York. The city was the headquarters not only of its own, but of the national society. In the central and western portions of the State, more largely settled from New England, there was much activity. In New Jersey there was little attempted and little accomplished. In Pennsylvania there had been a sad reaction after the days when the old Pennsylvania Abolition Society was a power there and did so much to keep that Commonwealth moored to the principles of its great founder and to those of the Revolution. But its contiguity to the slave States, and its large German element, mainly intent on material good, gave little encouragement or success to antislavery efforts, though there, as elsewhere, they were made.

Indeed, in consequence of antislavery agitation, both within and without the State, a State convention was called, mainly by leaders of the Democratic party, professedly to strengthen the bonds of the Union, though really to discountenance and put down such agitation. It failed, in the language of Judge Woodward, who was a member and in sympathy with its object, because Thaddeus Stevens, then in the zenith of his powers and popularity, "ridiculed the convention into nothingness." He was not equally successful, however, in the convention for revising the constitution ; for, with all his powers, he could not prevent that body from inserting the word

“white” into the suffrage clause of that instrument. The ignominy and partisan profligacy of that action were evinced by the unblushing request, which seems to have been successful, and which was set forth in a memorial from Bucks County, in which it was urged, as a reason why the word “white” should be inserted, that negro votes sometimes controlled elections; “and that at the last election one member of the assembly, the county commissioner, and auditor were returned as elected by the force of the votes of blacks, when the opponents would have been elected *except for the negro suffrage*.”

While Eastern Abolitionists were thus actively engaged in their work, and meeting its peculiar exigencies, their brethren at the West were not idle. Nor were they without their share of vicissitudes, substantially like those in the New England and the Middle States, though affected by the composite character of the population, even then, of that section of the country. The fact, too, that the defenders and abettors of slavery there, as elsewhere, made demands against which many who were not Abolitionists revolted, like John Quincy Adams, in behalf of the right of petition, and Mr. Lovejoy for the freedom of the press, exerted its influence. Concerning Illinois, Dr. Edward Beecher says that in it “there was an original leaven of antislavery principles in its earliest settlement, and preceding the discussions at the East; and the influence of this, added to that of papers from the East, awakened an extensive interest in the subject over the whole State.” But, while there might have been this “leaven of antislavery,” the prevailing tone of thought and feeling, as the great body of its early settlers were from slaveholding States, was the reverse. Accordingly it was seen in the ejection of Mr. Lovejoy’s press from St. Louis, that, when the lines were drawn, the vast preponderance of the popular sentiment and influence was on the side of the oppressor.

These facts, more clearly developed by the Alton riots and the murder of Lovejoy than by any previous demonstration, decided many minds, before hesitating, that the time had come for concerted action. Accordingly, when the convention of “the friends of the slave and of free discussion,”



called to meet at Upper Alton, Illinois, on the 26th of October, 1837, was broken up by the intrusion of proslavery men, who took the organization of the meeting into their own hands, adopted proslavery resolutions, and then dissolved the meeting, the supporters of law and order, whatever their views upon slavery had hitherto been, saw, in the words of Dr. Beecher, that "some organized, systematic effort was absolutely necessary to save our own liberties from the ruthless hands of unprincipled men."

A new call was issued, and two days later the convention met and formed the "Illinois State Antislavery Society." Having perfected their organization, adopted a constitution, and chosen their officers, Elihu Wolcott being president and E. P. Lovejoy secretary and chairman of the executive committee, they discussed and adopted a series of resolutions, at once comprehensive and thorough, and based upon the great principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Word of God. Among the resolutions was one declaring that "the cause of human rights, the liberty of speech and of the press, imperatively demand that the press of the 'Alton Observer' be re-established at Alton, with its present editor"; and pledging its members with the aid of Alton friends and "by the help of Almighty God," to take measures for its re-establishment. A preamble, couched in language of singular solemnity and force, prefixed to the constitution, and also a declaration of sentiments, reported by Dr. Beecher, were adopted. Fifty-five signatures were appended to the constitution.

A committee, consisting of Wolcott, Beecher, and Carter, was appointed to issue an "address to the citizens of the State on the subject of slavery, freedom of speech, of the press," etc. That also was a paper of singular ability and eloquence, placing the cause on the high ground of Christian principle, and enunciating with great clearness and force the primal truths of human rights and the paramount claims of God's Holy Word. But the strong Southern element which entered so largely into the population of Illinois prevented any very general adoption of such sentiments, however scriptural and republican in spirit and purpose. There were, indeed, ever faithful men and

women, churches and communities ; but the great body joined in the general apostasy, consenting to, if not defending, the giant wrong.

Ohio was settled, especially its eastern and northern portions, by a different class of citizens. There the New England element was strong ; and, being removed from the corrupting influences of cities and of commercial and manufacturing interests, society, at least in many localities, did not deteriorate as rapidly and fatally as did that which was left behind. There were many strong and earnest men in the abolition ranks, and many active antislavery associations ; though the southern portion of the State, like Indiana and Illinois, was strongly tinctured with proslavery sentiments, that had secured legislation and laws which they inspired and which were enacted at their behests. Its State Society, of which Leicester King, some years afterward nominated as a candidate for the Vice-Presidency by the Liberty party, was president, held a convention in April, 1835, continuing three days. At this convention, in addition to a consideration of the general subject, particular attention was paid to the condition of the colored people in the State, as also to the inhuman and barbarous laws which disgraced its statute-books, and which were only too faithfully executed by its inhabitants, especially by those residing in and near Cincinnati and on the borders of the Ohio River.

Indeed, a prominent feature of the meeting was the reading and discussion of two very able and exhaustive reports from committees appointed to consider "the condition of people of color," and the "laws of Ohio" concerning them. These laws forbade the entrance into the State of negroes and mulattoes without giving two freehold sureties to the amount of five hundred dollars for their good behavior and for their support if they should become a public charge. The penalty for not giving such sureties was "to be removed in the same manner as is required in the case of paupers." By another section it was enacted that if "any person being a resident of this State shall employ, harbor, or conceal any such negro," he shall pay a sum not exceeding one hundred dollars, and be liable for his support if he become a public charge. By another

statute it was enacted that no black or mulatto person should give evidence in court in a controversy or case in which a white person was involved.

It was easy, of course, for the committee to point out not only the inhumanity and wickedness of such legislation, but its unconstitutionality, — or, at least, its incompatibility with the constitution of the State, which declares “that ALL are born free and independent, and have certain natural and inalienable rights.” Nor was it any less easy to point out the evil workings of such statutes on the people thus hampered and held in check and constraint by them. “Few amongst the whites,” they say, “would be able to obtain sureties on such conditions; and much less blacks, who are strangers and penniless, and against whose race there exists a general prejudice.” As if to make their condition insupportable, all persons were forbid hiring or employing them. And if, in spite of all such cruel and unjust disabilities, any should succeed in life, and amass wealth, the section confronted them, forbidding their evidence in court on any subject in which a white man is involved. It was, then, but a legitimate inference when the committee declared that the “influence of such laws could not be otherwise than destructive to their moral and intellectual character and their pecuniary interests. Mental debasement, moral degradation, self-disrespect, unyielding prejudice on the part of the whites, and the most distressing poverty, are the natural and necessary consequences of their pernicious, unjust, and impolitic laws.”

Nor was it strange that the committee on the condition of the colored people “was obliged to report that of the estimated seven thousand and five hundred in the State, as a class, we find them ignorant, many of them intemperate and vicious,” intemperance, ignorance, and lewdness “being their besetting vices; that, instead of seeking to gain freeholds, and depending upon farming for subsistence, they congregate in towns, and become day laborers, barbers, and menial servants.” There were, however, redeeming facts, and satisfactory mention was made of “a settlement in Stark County, where there were three hundred people, mostly farmers,” with



a meeting-house and school-house, the whole population, with few exceptions, abstaining from intoxicating drinks.

A more specific inquiry was made in the spring of 1835, by the Antislavery Society of Lane Seminary, into the condition of the twenty-five hundred colored people of Cincinnati. From its report it appears that, as far back as 1829, a systematic effort was made by its citizens to aid in the removal of the free people of color from the United States. This movement not only excited the passions and prejudices of the lower stratum of society, but inspired the action of the commanding classes and of the authorities. The trustees of the township issued a proclamation that any colored man who did not fulfil the requirements of the law should leave the city. But, as that was simply impossible, only a small portion could or did leave. The mob then attempted to expel them by force; and for three days riot ran wild in the city. The colored people, appealing in vain to the city authorities, barricaded their houses, and thus alone the fury of the rioters was resisted. Thus hampered and oppressed in Ohio they sent a deputation to Canada, to find a place of refuge under a monarchy. The reply of the governor was as reassuring to them as it was severe and damaging to the recreant citizens of the Union. "Tell the republicans," he said, "on your side of the line, that we royalists do not know *men* by their color. Should you come to us, you will be entitled to all the privileges of the rest of her Majesty's subjects." In consequence of this gracious permission large numbers emigrated; and, in a few years, more than a thousand found a home in what was called Wilberforce Settlement.

Those who remained, however, suffered every indignity and injustice. Public schools and mechanical associations were closed against them, and the most ordinary labor was refused them, — a clergyman, in one instance, dismissing a member of his church from his employment because it was against the law to employ him. The poor man, spending many days in the unavailing search for employment, and returning to the minister for advice, received the disheartening reply: "I cannot help you; you must go to Liberia." Thus did the spirit

of slavery everywhere reveal itself to be the same heartless and fiendish element, disturbing alike the normal condition of society and that of the individuals of which that society was composed. Men under its influence lost much of their manhood, and communities were made willing to exhibit the most revolting features of barbarism itself.

The high-handed measures of Congress, in its denial of the right of petition and freedom of speech, caused much excitement and indignation in the free States. The antislavery men of Massachusetts, sharing largely in these feelings, were among the first to give expression to this sense of wrong, as they were firm in their purpose to resist these encroachments, and to secure, if possible, a reversal of such hostile legislation. Consequently, during the session of the legislature in 1837, a large number of petitions were presented, calling upon that body "to protest without delay, in the name of the people of this Commonwealth," against the rule of Congress which laid upon the table all memorials and other papers concerning slavery, without being printed, read, or referred. These memorials were referred to an able committee of one from each county, of which Artemas Lee of Templeton, Worcester County, was chairman. The committee granted a full, fair, and courteous hearing to the friends and representatives of the memorialists, — a favor made more noticeable and grateful to them by its striking contrast with the insolent and supercilious course of Mr. Lunt, chairman of a similar committee of the previous legislature.

Henry B. Stanton and George S. Hillard appeared in behalf of the petitioners, and urged their claims with ability and eloquence. Mr. Hillard's speech was able and scholarly, exciting in the friends of freedom hopes of future service which his subsequent career did not justify. It was eclipsed, however, by the remarkable effort of his colleague. Mr. Stanton's argument on that occasion was regarded, by those whose good fortune it was to hear it, as one of those rare exhibitions of eloquence which now and then burst upon a delighted and enraptured auditory. It was a kind of epoch in one's life-

time, to be remembered, but seldom repeated or paralleled. It wrought its effects upon the audience, however, perhaps more by its gorgeous diction, vivid coloring, and magnetic power, as the speaker described the ideal possibilities of some coming stage of human progress, than by the vigor of its reasoning, or its special adaptedness to the state of public feeling and sentiment as then existing. Its effects upon the audience, as described by those who heard it, were almost magical. It was stereotyped, and two hundred thousand copies were circulated. Mr. Garrison thus refers to it in his report: "The occasion was one of great moral sublimity. Mr. Stanton, though laboring under physical indisposition, was happily enabled not only to meet, but even to transcend, the high expectation of the friends of liberty. His words became living coals, and his eloquence bore all things onward like an overflowing stream."

"The effects of antislavery agitation," Mr. Stanton said, "are not hemmed in by State lines, nor circumscribed by local boundaries. They are moral in their nature; obey no laws but those of the human mind; owe allegiance to no constitution but that of the immortal soul. Impalpable, but real, the truths we proclaim overleap all geographical divisions, and lay their strong grasp upon the conscience. Moral light, diffused at the North, is like the Aurora Borealis; it will travel onward to the South. The slaveholder may intrench himself behind bristling bayonets, but the truth, armed with the omnipotence of its Author, breaks through the serried legions. At Mason and Dixon's line he may pile his prohibitory statutes to the clouds as his wall of defence; but truth, like light, is elastic and impressible, and, mounting upward, will overleap the summit and penetrate his concealment. Yes, sir, if the Union were rent into ten thousand fragments, yet, if on any fragment there was a slaveholder, antislavery agitation would search him out, and scatter upon his naked heart the living coals of truth. God has written the verity of our principles on the inside of every oppressor in the land. He can destroy the record only with his nature. And if the American slaveholder, returning wearied with the destruction of every antislavery pamphlet



and press and society and man in the nation, should seek repose in his chamber, these words, written with the finger of God, would flame out from its walls in letters of blinding intensity : ‘ Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong ; that useth his neighbor’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work ! ’ ”

The buoyant hopes thus eloquently portrayed were, however, hardly fulfilled. The history of the struggle, then commencing and now complete, did not realize the bright anticipations so brilliantly sketched by the fervid orator of that occasion. These words were spoken in 1837 ; what did twenty years’ fighting reveal ? The nation rocked from centre to circumference, and on the eve of rebellion and disruption, not upon the question whether slavery should be abolished at the South, but whether it should not be extended to the North. In the mean time Texas had been annexed ; the Mexican War had been fought ; the Missouri Compromise had been abrogated ; the Fugitive Slave Law had been enacted ; the 7th of March Speech had been spoken, and Mr. Webster had been thanked by eight hundred of the prominent citizens of Massachusetts, including clergymen, president and professors of its leading college and theological seminary, for “ recalling them to their duties under the Constitution.” Four years more revealed the nation in the agonies of civil war, the South almost a unit in the strife, at best but a lean minority of its ministers and churches protesting against the treason or condemning its villainous cause.

Where were then the truths overleaping “ all geographical divisions,” and laying their “ strong grasp upon the conscience ” ? Where was that moral light, diffused like the Aurora Borealis through the North, and travelling onward to the South, penetrating the concealment of the slaveholder, searching him out, and scattering “ on his naked heart the coals of living truth ” ?

“ Alas ! Leviathan is not so tamed.”

Something more is wanting than moral light or the living coals of truth. There must be a “ living ” conscience and a

loyal heart. They were wanting, and so were the hoped-for and promised results. A slaveholding government, instead of relaxing its grasp, strengthened itself in the high places of power, to be dislodged only by divisions in its own ranks, and not by the greater strength of the friends of freedom ; instead of contracting the area of slavery, enlarging it ; instead of regarding it, with the fathers, exceptional and sectional, determining to make it national and supreme. And had there been only moral agencies, such would have been the result. It was material, not moral force, the sword of steel and not the sword of truth, that broke the power of the master and struck his fetters from the bondman. It was God who, amid and by the fires and convulsions of rebellion and civil war, undid the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free. The moral forces then invoked and employed were, doubtless, a part of the pre-determined plan, and had their place among the measures that were needed for the result to be secured. But the mode finally adopted was so unlike anything planned for or anticipated that the wisest and most earnest Abolitionist will be modest in his claims, and ascribe the victory to God, rather than to man, — to Him whose prerogative it is to bring good out of evil, and to make even the wrath of man praise Him.

Mr. Stanton thus expressed the unyielding purpose of those for whom he spoke : “ Undeterred by official proscription or private denunciation, by prosecution at common law or persecutions without law, by legislative enactments or ecclesiastical anathemas, the friends of the slave, guided by the wisdom, cheered by the favor, and protected by the power of God, will prosecute their work. And that man or that party who shall attempt to arrest this cause in its onward progress will be borne down by the advancing host.” It was to this vigorous protest and promised persistence of the antislavery men of those days that was due the manly response of the Massachusetts legislature to the prayer of the memorialists. A favorable report was returned, declaring that “ the act of Congress, in refusing to refer and consider the petitions of the people on the subject of slavery, was a virtual denial of the right of petition itself,” and “ at variance with the spirit and intent of the

Constitution, and injurious to the cause of freedom and free institutions." The action of the senators and representatives from Massachusetts was applauded, and the declaration made that "Congress, having exclusive legislation in the District of Columbia, possesses the right to abolish slavery in said District, and that its exercise should only be restrained by a regard for the public good." After an earnest and animated debate, these resolutions were sustained in the House by an almost unanimous vote, only sixteen members voting in the negative.

The Senate, under the lead of Charles Allen, voted unanimously to amend the resolution asserting the power of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, so as to affirm "that the early exercise of such right is demanded by the united sentiment of the civilized world, by the principles of the Revolution and humanity." An additional resolution was adopted, with only one dissenting voice, in favor of circumscribing slavery within the limits of the States where it had already been established, and opposing the admission of any new State with a constitution establishing or admitting it. The Senate finally receded from its action; not from any disposition to retreat from the principles it had avowed, but for the purpose of preserving more unity of action with the House of Representatives.

The legislature of Vermont, too, resolved, and sent its resolutions to each of the States, that neither Congress nor the State governments have any constitutional power to abridge the free expression of opinions, or their transmission through the medium of the public mails; and that Congress possesses the power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. This action of the legislatures of Vermont and Massachusetts indicated an advance in antislavery sentiment, cheering its friends, exasperating its foes, and stimulating both alike to further endeavors to promote their conflicting purposes and plans.

Other facts cheered and encouraged the friends of the slave. In the month of August, 1836, the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts unanimously decided, in the case of the slave-child Med, brought from New Orleans by Mrs. Slater, who came



to reside with her father, Thomas Aves of Boston, that "an owner of a slave in another State, where slavery is warranted by law, voluntarily bringing such slave into this State, has no authority to retain him against his will, or to carry him out of the State against his consent, for the purpose of being held in slavery." This important opinion was delivered by Chief Justice Shaw. The suit had been prosecuted with unfaltering zeal by the Boston Female Antislavery Society. Samuel E. Sewall and Ellis Gray Loring, assisted by Rufus Choate, conducted the case for the Commonwealth. The argument of Mr. Loring was pronounced a masterly and exhaustive effort, worthy of the cause he advocated and the great tribunal before which it was delivered.

This decision was followed by another, hardly less important. On the 20th of January, 1837, the judiciary committee of the Massachusetts House of Representatives was directed to inquire into the expediency of providing some process by which one under personal restraint may try his right to liberty before a jury. The chairman of the committee, James C. Alvord of Greenfield, a young and able lawyer and rising statesman, of whom high hopes were entertained, made an elaborate report, in which the sacred right of trial by jury was vindicated. An act was reported providing that "if any person is imprisoned, restrained of his liberty, or held in duress, unless it be in the custody of some public officer of the law, by force of a lawful warrant or other process, civil or criminal, issued by a court of competent jurisdiction, he shall be entitled, as of right, to a writ of personal replevin, and to be thereby in the manner specified in the act." The legislature, with entire unanimity, gave its sanction to this important bill.

The sixth anniversary meeting of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society was held at Boston in January, 1838. On its application, the hall of the House of Representatives was granted for its use, and it was thronged with members and others anxious to listen to the eloquent advocates of immediate emancipation. At the meeting Edmund Quincy submitted a resolution, gratefully acknowledging the signal manner in which the antislavery cause had been prospered during the

past year, and "the bright ray of promise which assures us that the beams of the Sun of Righteousness will not forever be obscured by the mists which rise from a sensual and mercenary world."

Mr. Quincy and his associates were, doubtless, too sanguine and over-confident; and yet there were cheering signs of progress. Shortly afterward, the legislature of Massachusetts adopted, with little opposition, a series of resolutions against the admission of Texas; against the admission of any more slave States; in favor of the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia and the prohibition of slavery in the Territories. These resolutions were reported by James C. Alvord, then a senator from Franklin County. They were accompanied by two reports, in which the questions involved were discussed with great clearness and force. In the autumn of that year Mr. Alvord was elected to Congress, much to the gratification not only of the antislavery men of Massachusetts but of the whole country. He did not live, however, to take his seat in the councils of the nation, and in his early and premature grave were buried the high hopes which had been excited by his brief and brilliant career.

While the questions involved in these resolutions were pending before the legislative committee, Wendell Phillips addressed it against the annexation of Texas, unveiling and properly characterizing the plottings of the Slave Power in that matter. Angelina E. Grimké, the first lady ever permitted to address a legislative committee in the Commonwealth, was allowed to appear before the same. Her appeals were earnest, eloquent, and full of pathos and tenderness. She referred to her self-exile from South Carolina, her native State, because she could not endure the sufferings to which the bondmen were doomed; and she invoked the action of the legislature and the people of the North. Her self-possession and dignity, her facts, arguments, and appeals, deeply impressed the committee, the legislature, and the people of the Commonwealth.

The legislature of Connecticut, under the lead of Francis Gillette, then a young representative from Hartford, afterward

a member of the United States Senate, and always an earnest and consistent advocate of freedom, repealed the black law enacted in 1833 for the purpose of suppressing the colored school of Miss Prudence Crandall. The same legislature passed resolutions against the annexation of Texas, the slave-trade in the District of Columbia, and in favor of the right of petition, thus placing Connecticut by the side of Massachusetts in the cause of freedom.

About the same time the legislature of Vermont, after listening to a long and brilliant speech from Alvan Stewart of New York, reported resolutions similar in character to those adopted in Massachusetts. They were passed, too, in the Senate, by a unanimous vote, and in the House without division. Henry B. Stanton and other eloquent champions of the cause addressed the legislatures and legislative committees of other States; and, where such hearings were refused, attended and pleaded the cause of freedom in other capitals while their legislatures were in session. In all the other legislatures of the Northern States, too, there were active and growing minorities interested and engaged in the same great work.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE ALTON TRAGEDY, — MURDER OF ELIJAH P. LOVEJOY.

Mr. Lovejoy discusses the Slavery Question. — Maintains the Right of the Press and Speech. — Murder of a Negro. — Charge of Judge Lawless. — Destruction of the Office of the "Observer." — The Press destroyed at Alton. — The Slaveholders demand its Suppression. — It is destroyed. — Mr. Lovejoy mobbed in Missouri. — Insulted at Home. — Speech to the Citizens. — Excitement in Alton. — Mr. Linder leads a Mob. — State Society formed at Upper Alton. — Speech of Edward Beecher. — Meeting at the Store to protect the Press. — Assault upon the Warehouse. — The Fire returned. — Mr. Lovejoy shot; died. — Press thrown into the River. — The Murder applauded or excused by the Supporters of Slavery. — Resolutions of the Boston Abolitionists. — Faneuil Hall refused. — Dr. Channing's Letter. — Mr. Hallett's Resolutions. — The Hall granted. — Address of Dr. Channing. — Resolutions of Mr. Hallett. — Mr. Austin's Speech. — Reply of Wendell Phillips. — Excitement. — Action of the National and Massachusetts Antislavery Societies. — Edmund Quincy. — Non-Resistants.

On the 7th of November, 1837, the cause of freedom received its first baptism of blood. On that day Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy was murdered by a mob at Alton, Illinois. No previous event had so startled, alarmed, and fixed the attention of the more conscientious and thoughtful portion of the country. Nothing had so clearly indicated to antislavery men the nature of the conflict in which they were engaged, the desperate character of the foe with which they were grappling.

Mr. Lovejoy was a native of Maine, and a graduate of Waterville College in 1826. At the age of twenty-four he went to the West, and became a teacher in St. Louis. Two years afterward he became the editor of a political journal of the National Republican party, and an active supporter of Henry Clay. In 1832 he united with the Presbyterian Church, entered for a brief period the Theological Seminary at Princeton, New Jersey, was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and, in the autumn of that year, returned to Mis-

souri, and established the St. Louis "Observer," a weekly religious journal. During the ensuing year, while avowing his hostility to immediate emancipation, he expressed the opinion that, if slavery could be removed from Missouri, that great State would start forward in a race of energy and improvement which would place her in the front rank of her sister States. While absent from the city, at a meeting of the synod, an excitement commenced in regard to his strictures on slavery ; and the alarmed proprietors of the paper issued a card, declaring their opposition to the wild scheme of the Abolitionists. Before leaving home, he had received a communication from nine leading citizens of St. Louis, friends and supporters of the "Observer," begging him to "pass over in silence everything connected with the subject of slavery." Upon that communication he made the indorsement that he did not yield to the wishes expressed, had been persecuted for not doing so, but had kept a good conscience, which had more than repaid him for all he had suffered. "I have sworn eternal hostility to slavery, and by the blessing of God I will never go back."

Returning to St. Louis, Mr. Lovejoy issued an address to his excited fellow-citizens, in which he maintained with signal boldness the right to discuss questions pertaining to slavery, or any other evil which concerned the interests of humanity. "I deem it," he said, "my duty to take my stand upon the Constitution. Here is firm ground ; I feel it to be such ; and I do most respectfully but decidedly declare to you my fixed determination to maintain this ground. We have slaves, it is true ; but I am not one." While avowing his purpose never to surrender the freedom of speech and of the press, he expressed the hope that he should maintain these rights with the meekness and humility that became a Christian, but especially a Christian minister. He reminded the inflamed people of St. Louis that blood kindred to that which flowed in his veins had flowed freely on the plains of Lexington and on the heights of Bunker Hill, and he assured them that his blood should flow as freely as if it were water, "ere," he said, "I surrender my right to plead the cause of truth and righteousness before my

fellow-citizens and in the face of all opposers." Protesting against all attempts, by whomsoever made, to interfere with the liberty of the press, he declared his fixed purpose to submit to no such dictation. "I am," he said, "prepared to abide the consequences. I have appealed to the Constitution and the laws of my country; if they fail to protect me, I appeal to God, and with him I cheerfully rest my cause."

At the request of the proprietors of the "Observer," he surrendered its editorship, and removed to Alton. The paper soon passing into other hands as payment of a debt, its new owner presented it to him, and he at once returned and entered upon its publication. In the spring of 1836 an excited mob took Francis J. McIntosh, a mulatto, from the jail, where he had been lodged for fatally stabbing one officer and wounding another who had arrested him, carried him out of the city, chained him to a tree, and burned him to death. As the matter came before the grand jury, Judge Lawless in his charge expressed the astounding sentiment that if a mob be hurried on to its deeds of violence and blood by some "mysterious, metaphysical, and almost electric frenzy," participators in it are absolved from guilt, and are not proper subjects of punishment. If such be the fact, he said, "act not at all in the matter; the case then transcends your jurisdiction, it is beyond the reach of human law."

For commenting on this revolting deed, and the still more revolting judicial opinion, Mr. Lovejoy's office was entered and destroyed by a mob. He removed the press to Alton; only, however, to see it seized upon the bank of the river and broken into fragments. A meeting of citizens was held at once, and a pledge given to reimburse him for his loss. Mr. Lovejoy assured them that it was not his purpose to establish an abolition, but a religious press. Indeed, he was not an Abolitionist, though he expected to live and die an uncompromising enemy to slavery, and should hold himself at liberty to speak and write as he pleased on any subject. In July, 1837, a public meeting assembled, bitterly denounced the "Observer" for its publication of articles favorable to abolitionism, and censured its editor. To a committee appointed by this meeting



Mr. Lovejoy declared, with great firmness, that liberty of speech is something not to be called in question, — that it was a right which came from his Maker, belonging to man as man, and inalienable.

Although the “Observer” was no longer printed in St. Louis, its citizens and presses demanded that Illinois should abate what they regarded as a nuisance, under the penalty of losing the trade of slaveholding States, — the same rod, indeed, so long and successfully held *in terrorem* by the domineering South over the abject North. Consequently, in the month of August, Mr. Lovejoy’s office and press were again destroyed, during his absence; and he was most grossly insulted on his return. Another press was purchased, and stored in the warehouse of Gerry and Miller. The mob again assembled, broke open the building, destroyed the press, and threw the fragments into the Mississippi. A few days afterward he was mobbed again at the house of his mother-in-law, in St. Charles, Missouri, on his return from church, where he had officiated; and he was compelled to leave clandestinely to save his life.

Meetings were held in Alton by the excited inhabitants to consider the question of the longer publication of the paper. At one held on the 3d of November, at his request he was permitted to speak in his own behalf. With manly firmness and Christian boldness he reminded his fellow-citizens that he respected their feelings, and acted in opposition to them with great regret. He valued their good opinion; but he must be, he said, “governed by higher considerations than either the favor or the fear of man. I am impelled to the course I have taken because I fear God. As I shall answer to my God, in the great day, I dare not abandon my sentiments, or cease in all proper ways to propagate them.” Reminding the meeting that if he had committed any crime they could convict him, as they had the public sentiment and juries on their side, he asked: “If I have been guilty of no violation of law, why am I hunted up and down continually like a partridge upon the mountain? Why am I threatened with the tar-barrel? Why am I waylaid every day, and from

night to night? Why is my life in jeopardy every hour?" Planting himself on his unquestionable rights, he declared the question to be, "Whether my property shall be protected; whether I shall be suffered to go home to my family at night without being assailed and threatened with tar and feathers and assassination; whether my afflicted wife, whose life has been in jeopardy from continued alarm and excitement, shall night after night be driven from her sick-bed into the garret, to save her life from brickbats and the violence of the mob." This allusion to his family overcame his feelings, and he burst into tears. The sympathy of the meeting was deeply excited. Many sobbed aloud, and even some of his enemies wept. Recovering himself, he begged forgiveness for having been betrayed into weakness by the thought of his family; and he assured the meeting that he had no personal fears. Admitting that he was powerless, he said: "I know you can tar and feather me, hang me up, or put me in the Mississippi. But what then? Where shall I go? I have been made to feel if I am not safe in Alton I shall not be safe anywhere."

There were some who, while insisting on the suppression of his press and driving him from Alton, expressed the wish that no unnecessary disgrace should be affixed to him. To such suggestions he replied: "I reject all such compassion. You cannot disgrace me. Scandal, falsehood, and calumny have done their worst. My shoulders have borne the burden till it sits easy upon them. I, and I alone, can disgrace myself; and the deepest of all disgraces would be at a time like this to deny my Master by forsaking his cause. He died for me; and I were most unworthy to bear his name should I refuse, if need be, to die for Him." Reminding the meeting that he had, on a recent visit to St. Charles, been torn from the frantic embrace of his family, he closed with this declaration:—"I have concluded, after consultation with my friends, and earnestly seeking counsel of God, to remain at Alton, and here to insist on protection in the exercise of my rights. If the civil authorities refuse to protect me, I must look to God; and, if I die, I am determined to make my grave in Alton. Sir, I dare not flee away from Alton. Should I attempt it, I should

feel that the angel of the Lord, with his flaming sword, was pursuing me wherever I went. It is because I fear God that I am not afraid of all who oppose me in this city."

His earnestness and manifest sincerity made a deep impression upon the audience. Dr. Edward Beecher, who was present, thus describes the scene : — " I have been affected oftentimes with the power of intellect and eloquence ; but never was I so overcome as at this hour. He made no display, there was no rhetorical decoration, no violence of action. All was native truth, and deep, pure, and tender feeling. Many a hard face did I see wet with tears as he struck the chords of feeling to which God made the soul to respond. Even his bitter enemies wept. It reminded me of Paul before Festus, and of Luther at Worms."

The crowd, however, then present, represented too faithfully the popular sentiment of that section of the country to be much controlled by the faith or eloquence of such a man. They were far better prepared to respond to the counter appeals of John Hogan, then a Methodist minister and afterward a Democratic member of Congress from St. Louis, who, launching his vile epithets and fierce invectives upon Mr. Lovejoy and the Abolitionists, inflamed the minds and stirred up to deeper frenzy that class of men of which mobs are made.

The city was in a state of intense excitement. Violence was anticipated, as it had been foreshadowed by the disgraceful and disorganizing proceedings which had broken up a convention at Upper Alton, during the previous week, and had defeated the purposes of its original promoters. The call was to " the friends of the slave and of free discussion in Illinois " ; and yet, by packing the convention with men of an opposite faith, under the lead of W. F. Linder, attorney-general of the State, a series of resolutions was adopted indorsing slavery and proclaiming that all interference with it should be " discountenanced." And by the same vote that sustained these resolutions was the convention adjourned *sine die*. The men, however, who called the convention, were not to be thus baffled. A subsequent meeting was called at the house of Rev. Mr. Hurlburt of the same place ; and, although the



formation of an antislavery society had not been one of the fixed objects of the original convention, it was now seen to be demanded, and it was accordingly effected. Officers were chosen, and a most able address and declaration of sentiments, from the pen of Dr. Beecher, were sent forth. To add to the flame already burning so fiercely, a colonization meeting was held about that time, at which fiery harangues were made, more hostile to antislavery and its friends than to slavery and its abettors. Of course, a conflict so acrimonious and determined between principles so radical and antagonistic must culminate in something more sanguinary than words. The arrival of another press was the occasion of a demonstration which ended in arson and blood.

The enemies of Mr. Lovejoy had determined to seize and destroy it on its arrival; while a few friends, equally in earnest, had determined to defend it. As the former were watching for its coming, about fifty of the latter assembled at the stone warehouse where it was to be stored on its arrival, and organized an armed force for its defence. After that organization had been effected, about thirty remained, under the command of a city constable. The looked-for press arrived at three o'clock on the morning of the 7th of November, and the intelligence of its arrival was made known by the blowing of horns. The mayor, John McKrum, went to the warehouse and aided in storing it. The utmost excitement, however, prevailed during the day, though the mayor came to the conclusion, after making inquiries, that no further violence was intended. There being no sign of an assault on the building, at nine o'clock in the evening most of its defenders retired, leaving about a dozen, willing to risk their lives, if needful, in defence of Mr. Lovejoy and his property.

An hour or two afterward there came from the grog-shops thirty or forty persons, who knocked at the door and demanded the press. Mr. Gilman, one of the owners of the warehouse, informed them that it would not be given up; that they had been authorized by the mayor to defend the property, and they should do it at the hazard of their lives. Presenting a pistol, the leader announced that they were resolved to have it at any

sacrifice. Stones were thrown, windows broken, and shots were fired at the building. These shots were returned, and several of the rioters were wounded, one mortally. Ladders were obtained and preparations were made for firing the building, and the cry was raised: "Burn them out." The mayor, accompanied by a justice of the peace, was sent by the mob to propose the surrender of the press on condition that no one should be injured. To the demand of Mr. Gilman that the mayor should call upon the citizens to save his building, the latter replied that the mob was too strong, that he had failed to persuade and was powerless to command. Admitting the lawful right of persons within the building to defend the property, he retired and reported the result to the rioters, who raised the cry: "Fire the building and shoot every d—d Abolitionist as he leaves!" With the aid of ladders, the mob mounted the building and fired the roof. Five of the defenders sallied forth from the building, fired upon and dispersed the mob, and returned. Mr. Lovejoy and two others then stepped outside of the building, were fired upon by rioters concealed by a pile of lumber, and Mr. Lovejoy received five balls, three of them in his breast. Returning at once to the counting-room, he expired almost instantly, exclaiming, "I am shot! I am shot!" One of his friends was wounded, but not fatally.

After his death, those in the building offered to surrender; but their offer was declined. One of the number, going out for the purpose of making terms with the rioters, was severely wounded. Most of them left the building, but were fired upon in their attempts to escape. The mob then rushed into the building, seized the press, broke it, and threw the fragments into the river. The next day Mr. Lovejoy's body was borne to his home, amid the heartless rejoicings and scoffings of those who had destroyed his property and taken his life. Thus bravely fell one of the most heroic of that number of noble and earnest men who early consecrated themselves to the great and glorious purpose of maintaining, at fearful odds, that essential palladium of a republic, — freedom of thought, speech, and the press. The conduct of the mayor was glaringly vacillating, inefficient, and open to criticism and censure. He himself ad-

mitted that his directions, on an occasion when the majesty of law should have asserted its supremacy, had been the advice of a citizen, rather than the command of an officer.

There were no demonstrations friendly or hostile at Mr. Lovejoy's burial, save a simple prayer at his grave. He was buried on a bluff, overlooking, in its peaceful repose, the rolling river and busy town beneath. For many years no stone marked the spot. Not long since, however, an admirer and friend of the martyr procured a simple monument, with this inscription:—

*Hic jacet*

LOVEJOY.

*Jam parce sepulto.*

“Here lies Lovejoy; now spare his grave.”

What a change has a third of a century wrought. Then the youthful minister of the gospel, hunted, in his own touching words, like a partridge on the mountains, and appealing in vain for protection against the infuriated mob, found the officers of government and the leaders of public opinion awed by the demon of slavery, rather than inspired by the genius of liberty. Now, that mob dispersed, many of its members and leaders known to have come to a violent and ignominious end, and that terrible system, the guilty source of all that violence, no longer existing. The victim himself is admirably cherished in the nation's memory, and is sure of a grateful mention on the pages of its history.

The murder of Lovejoy made a deep impression upon the country. The friends of slavery and the enemies of free discussion applauded, or at best excused, the bloody deed, while the friends of liberty and of the freedom of speech and press received the news with profound sorrow and alarm. They saw in it a new revelation of the magnitude and serious character of the contest on which they had entered. They saw, too, that the conflict was not to be the bloodless encounter of ideas alone, but one in which might be involved scenes of bloody violence and personal hazard and harm. Had they understood the full significance of that sanguinary act, and the desperate character of their foe, as revealed in the events of subsequent years, their alarm might well have been greater.



The Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society was at once convened in Boston, and a series of resolutions was adopted declaring that the guilt of that bloody tragedy was not confined to the immediate actors therein ; that it was one of the natural and inevitable consequences of tolerating the system of slavery ; and that in the murder of this Christian martyr the church, the press, and the people, who justified the enslavement of their countrymen, instigated riots, and connived at the prostration of lawful authority, had participated to a greater or less extent.

When the intelligence of the Alton tragedy, as it was commonly characterized, reached Boston, Dr. William Ellery Channing and a hundred of its citizens applied for the use of Faneuil Hall, to give expression to their horror at this murder of a Christian clergyman. But their application was rejected. This refusal, and especially the reasons assigned therefor, greatly increased the popular indignation and apprehension ; affording, as it did, but another illustration of the national vassalage and subserviency to the Slave Power, when even the doors of the Cradle of Liberty were rudely closed against those who would mourn over the martyrdom of one of its bravest and most heroic defenders. Men of all parties and sects were greatly excited. With the fearless promptitude demanded by the crisis, Dr. Channing addressed an appeal to the citizens of Boston to reverse this arbitrary action of the city government. Avowing that the purpose of the proposed meeting was to maintain the sacredness and freedom of the press against all assaults, he declared that to intimate that such action did not express the public opinion of Boston, and that it would provoke a mob, was to “ pronounce the severest libel upon that city.” “ Has it come to this ? ” he asked. “ Has Boston fallen so low ? May not its citizens be trusted to come together to express the great principles of liberty for which their fathers died ? Are our fellow-citizens to be murdered in the act of defending their property and of assuming the right of free discussion ? and is it unsafe in this metropolis to express abhorrence of the deed ? If such be our degradation, we ought to know the awful truth ; and those among us who retain a portion of the spirit of our

ancestors should set themselves to work to recover their degenerate posterity." He asserted that Boston, by this action of her city authorities, had bade Alton go on to destroy the press and put down the liberty of speech.

This thrilling appeal from one occupying Dr. Channing's position made a deep impression. A public meeting was called at the old Supreme Court room to "take into consideration the reasons assigned by the mayor and aldermen for withholding Faneuil Hall, and to act in the premises as may be deemed expedient." The room was filled to overflowing. George Bond was made chairman, and Benjamin F. Hallett was chosen secretary. After the reading of Dr. Channing's letter, a series of pertinent resolutions, offered by Mr. Hallett, was discussed and unanimously adopted. A committee of two from each ward was appointed to renew the application, which happily was successful.

On the 8th of December the meeting was holden. The hall was filled to repletion by the citizens of Boston and vicinity. Jonathan Phillips, a much respected citizen, was called to the chair, and opened the meeting with a brief and pertinent speech. Dr. Channing then made an eloquent and impressive address. A series of resolutions, also from his pen, was read by Mr. Hallett, and seconded and eloquently supported by George S. Hillard.

Thus far everything had been decorous, dignified, and in keeping with the occasion. The addresses had been listened to with respectful attention, if not with unquestioning approbation. At this point James T. Austin, attorney-general of the Commonwealth, a prominent lawyer, well known in Faneuil Hall, a trained party-leader and most adroit caucus-speaker, made an inflammatory and exciting speech. It was vociferously applauded by the riotous element of the meeting, which, it was estimated, constituted one third of the assembly. Standing in that hall, consecrated to liberty and redolent with the memories of its martyrs, the attorney-general of Massachusetts unblushingly declared that Lovejoy was not only presumptuous and imprudent while he lived, but that "he died as the fool dieth." He compared, with equal violence to truth

and taste, the murderers of Lovejoy with the men who destroyed the tea in Boston harbor. He declared that wherever the abolition fever raged there were mobs and murders. Alluding to the bondmen in the most offensive terms, he said : —

“ We have a menagerie here, with lions, tigers, a hyena and elephant, a jackass or two, and monkeys in plenty. Suppose, now, some new cosmopolite, some man of philanthropic feelings, not only toward man, but animals, who believes that all are entitled to freedom as an inalienable right, should engage in the humane task of giving freedom to these wild beasts of the forest, some of whom are nobler than their keepers ; or, having discovered some new mode of reaching their understanding, should try to induce them to break their cages and be free. The people of Missouri had as much reason to be afraid of their slaves as we should have to be afraid of the wild beasts of the menagerie. They had the same dread of Lovejoy that we should have of the supposed instigator, if we really believed the bars would be broken and the caravan let loose to prowl about our streets.”

Having pronounced this disgraceful and seditious harangue, the attorney-general retired. Wendell Phillips ascended the platform, and was met with the hostile demonstrations of the partisans of Austin, who had just applauded so vociferously his unfeeling and inhuman appeal to their vile passions and still viler prejudices. Mr. Phillips was then a young lawyer, unknown to most present, who had gone to the meeting with no intention of taking any part in its proceedings. Though his first words were met with boisterous outcries, he expressed the hope that he would be permitted to avow his surprise at the sentiments just uttered by such a man, and at the applause they had received in that hall. He characterized and condemned that gentleman's language in the strongest terms of reprobation, though it was done in terms and tones of thrilling eloquence. “ When I heard,” he said, “ the gentleman lay down principles which placed the murderers of Alton side by side with Otis and Hancock, with Quincy and Adams, I thought those pictured lips,” pointing to their portraits in the hall,



"would have broken into voice to rebuke the recreant American, the slanderer of the dead."

These words were received with mingled demonstrations of censure and applause. "Sir," continued Mr. Phillips, "for the sentiments he has uttered, on soil consecrated by the prayers of the Puritans and the blood of patriots, the earth should have yawned and swallowed him up." Here the uproar became great, and he could not be heard. William Sturgis, an eminent Boston merchant, ascended the platform and placed himself by the side of Mr. Phillips; but he, too, was met by the loud cries of the excited rioters. "Phillips or nobody," was their fiendish cry. "Make him take it back! He sha'n't go on until he takes it back!" Obtaining a hearing, Mr. Sturgis said: "I did not come here to take any part in this discussion, nor do I intend to; but I do entreat you, fellow-citizens, by everything you hold sacred, I conjure you by every association connected with this hall, consecrated by our fathers to freedom of discussion, that you listen to any man who addresses you in a decorous manner."

Resuming, Mr. Phillips firmly and peremptorily declared that he could not take back his words, and reminded the excited throng that the attorney-general needed not their hisses against one so young, whose voice had never before been heard in that hall. He closed his speech with the declaration that "when liberty was in danger Faneuil Hall had the right, and it was her duty, to strike the key-note for the Union; that the passage of the resolutions, in spite of the opposition, led by the attorney-general, will show more decidedly the deep indignation with which Boston regards this outrage."

By this brave and brilliant speech Mr. Phillips, by one single bound, placed himself among the foremost and most popular of American orators, a position he has maintained by the increasing suffrages of the nation. Then began that advocacy of human rights which for more than a generation he continued with tireless and persistent zeal. To it he consecrated culture, learning, and that marvellous eloquence on which the multitudes of a generation hung with never-waning delight. Fearless and fierce in his denunciation of the wrongs of the op-

pressed, he was always merciless in his castigation of the oppressor and his abettors. Confident, too, in his own plans and modes of action, he was, perhaps, too apt to be critical, censorious, and sometimes intolerant toward those who were equally honest, earnest, and unselfish in their devotion to the same cause to which his and their labors were alike consecrated. But if some others were more judicious and practical in action, none equalled him on the platform and few surpassed him with the pen.

Hundreds, however, went from that meeting unchanged in thought and purpose, even by the terrible event that occasioned it, by the imposing presence and fervid eloquence which characterized it, or by the humiliating utterances that disgraced it. The virus of slavery had so poisoned the public mind and heart that the sentiments and feelings of the large body of the citizens of Boston were more nearly expressed by the brutal harangue of Austin than by the classic words of Channing or the fervid and indignant eloquence of Phillips. They still believed, with Hubbard Winslow, a Congregational clergyman of that city, who, within a month, in his Thanksgiving discourse, asserted that "the unchristian principles and measures" of the Abolitionists tended to fill the land "with violence and blood"; and that the mournful disaster at Alton was but their legitimate result. They accepted, too, his strange and subversive doctrine that "republican liberty is not the liberty to say and do what one pleases; but liberty to say and do what the prevailing voice and will of the brotherhood will allow and protect."

The executive committee of the American Antislavery Society set apart the anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims for simultaneous meetings throughout the free States, to commemorate the tragical death of Mr. Lovejoy. To this call the Abolitionists very generally responded. Many meetings were held in various portions of the country, and the essential barbarism and cruelty of slavery were made to be more distinctly seen and apprehended in the light of that bloody deed. As a legitimate result large accessions were made to the ranks of the pronounced and avowed Abolitionists.

A special meeting of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society was held in Boston. Amos A. Phelps gave a detailed statement of the tragic affair at Alton. William Lloyd Garrison spoke briefly, but with his usual strong and severe denunciation, not only of the mob, but of the cause which inspired it. Orestes A. Brownson defended, with great vigor and force, freedom of thought, of speech, and of the press. Of the martyred dead Mr. Phillips spoke eloquently. He referred mournfully to the alleged fact that the rioters at Alton were heard encouraging each other with references to "old Boston." He characterized, with becoming indignation, her humiliation when her name was made "the motto and war-cry of the mob."

Edmund Quincy, like Mr. Phillips, was then a young Boston lawyer. He had become somewhat interested in the discussions upon slavery, but as yet had not fully committed himself to the antislavery cause. But this event solved all doubts, removed all hesitations, and fixed his determination. He came to that meeting to lay, as an offering, his talents and social position upon the altar of an unpopular cause, dripping with the first fresh blood of martyrdom. In this his first antislavery speech he eloquently enunciated and vindicated the fundamental principles of the conflict, and referred, with much beauty and pathos, to "the sublime idea that throughout the vast extent of the free portions of this continent the sons and daughters of New England are gathered together, on this the birthday of their common mother, to pay due honor to the memory of a brother who has willingly laid down his life in defence of those principles of liberty to which she owed her birth." His labors, then commenced, continued with unabated activity until, by the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment, slavery disappeared; when, with Mr. Garrison, he retired from an organization which that great consummation seemed to them to render no longer necessary. Mr. Quincy had not the mellifluous, brilliant, and impressive eloquence of Mr. Phillips; but he brought to the conflict unrivalled wit, a polished and trenchant pen that had few equals. By voice and pen he rendered effective service to the antislavery cause, though often more caus-



tic than charitable toward an opponent, and sometimes apparently more anxious to make a point than to do strict justice, even to a co-laborer. He presented, too, with great clearness, the views of that class of reformers with whom he acted, and was among the ablest exponents of that type of abolitionism of which Mr. Garrison was the recognized leader. His reports, while secretary of the Antislavery Society, were models of patient and exhaustive research, of keen and brilliant rhetoric. Nor can they now be read without vivid impressions of the desperate nature of the disease which was then afflicting, disgracing, and endangering the nation, and clear conceptions of the remedies he and those he represented were endeavoring to apply to its cure.

While the great body of the Abolitionists and friends of free discussion thus honored the self-sacrificing and martyr spirit of Mr. Lovejoy, and justified his heroic defence of sacred rights assailed by armed ruffianism, there were a few among them who did not applaud, but rather condemned, his course. Especially was this true of a section of that small, active, but rather pugnacious portion of the New England Abolitionists who had adopted the extreme doctrine of non-resistance. They, deeming Mr. Lovejoy's position inconsistent with their own, not only questioned its wisdom, but even characterized it as indefensible. Such manifestations, however, clearly revealed the impracticable tendencies of their views, and foreshadowed not only the manifest harm and hindrance they unquestionably occasioned to the antislavery labors of the most of those who entertained them, but also the heavy burden they laid upon the cause itself.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### CALHOUN'S RESOLUTIONS. — ATHERTON'S RESOLUTIONS. — ASHBURTON TREATY.

Calhoun's Resolutions. — Smith's Amendment. — Allen's Motion. — Debate. — Atherton's Resolutions. — Southern Whigs. — Mr. Slade. — Speech of Mr. Clay. — Speech of Mr. Morris. — Resolutions of Vermont. — Meeting of the XXVith Congress. — Mr. Wise's Resolutions. — Mr. Thompson's Resolutions. Menace of Cooper. — Mr. Botts. — Motion of Mr. Adams. — Amendment of William Cost Johnson. — Feeling of the South. — Letter of the World's Convention to Southern Governors. — Quintuple Treaty. — Protest of General Cass. — Ashburton Treaty. — Debate in the Senate. — The Treaty sustained.

THE zeal and activity of the early Abolitionists, the evident impression they at first made upon the public conscience and reason, the rapidly increasing indications manifested by the press, State legislatures, and even by Congress, that antislavery ideas were spreading and gaining a stronger hold upon the popular mind and heart, gave no little concern to the champions of the Slave Power. Their unsuccessful attempts to secure penal enactments from Northern legislatures for the repression of free discussion, and organized efforts in behalf of emancipation, and the failure of riots and mobs to awe or subdue the rising spirit of liberty, impelled them to renewed activity at Washington to secure, if possible, the enunciation of principles and the adoption of measures by the general government which they had failed to extort from the State legislatures.

Animated by this purpose, Mr. Calhoun, the ever-watchful advocate and guardian of slavery, was quick to detect the apparent drift of things and scent the danger from afar. With a mind of extraordinary acuteness, he drew conclusions from premises however furnished, whether by the principles of his own false philosophy, the concessions of the Constitution, or

these popular demonstrations of the Northern States ; and, at the same time, exhibited the spectacle of a strong and downright man, profoundly in the wrong, seeking boldly and without equivocation, on the arena of debate and legislation, ends others were pursuing by menace, violence, or indirection.

In December, 1837, he introduced a series of resolutions defining the relative powers of the general and State governments upon slavery. The first four referred to slavery in the States, and the fifth referred to it in the Territories and the District of Columbia. The latter emphatically declared that the intermeddling of any State or any of its citizens to abolish slavery in the District, or in any of the Territories, on the ground or under the pretext that it was "immoral or sinful," would be a "direct and dangerous attack on the institutions of all the slaveholding States." The resolutions did not deny the power of Congress to abolish slavery in the District, or any of the Territories ; but simply denounced its exercise. Even Mr. Calhoun himself at that time did not defend or hold the dogma that Congress had no power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia or in the Territories.

Early in January, 1838, the Senate proceeded to the consideration of these resolutions. As ever, the North furnished its quota of recreants who, not content with withholding their support from its interests, fought actively and openly against them.

Mr. Norvell of Michigan desired to amend the first resolution, and proceeded to denounce the Abolitionists. He asserted that, under the pretext of its being a religious duty to extirpate slavery, "the incendiary leaders of abolitionism, in their fanatical exertions, will throw back for fifty years every hope of emancipation. Their humanity only rivets the chains of slavery still tighter."

To the proposed modifications of the resolutions Mr. Calhoun assented, as he was willing to make any concession to the opponents of the doctrines of abolitionism. Mr. Hubbard of New Hampshire hastened to declare that the adoption of Mr. Calhoun's resolution would tend to allay the spirit of abolitionism in the North.

On the other hand, it was moved by Mr. Smith of Indiana



to amend the resolutions so that nothing contained in them should be construed as expressing an opinion adverse to the sentiment that all men are created equal, to the freedom of speech and the press, and to the preservation of the Union. Referring to the remarks made relative to the punishment of Abolitionists, Mr. Morris of Ohio said he considered such avowals as subversive of all freedom and inimical to the institutions of the country. All men had an imprescriptible right, above all government, to freedom of speech and the right of petition. "I feel bound," he said, "to defend the rights of freedom of opinion, freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press, to the latest breath I may draw."

Mr. Wall of New Jersey questioned the right of the Senate to sit making creeds and drawing up abstract constitutional codes for the people; but Mr. Young of Illinois advocated the resolutions as they were, and comforted Mr. Calhoun with the assertion that in his State they set down as Abolitionists all who signed an abolition memorial. It was then proclaimed by Mr. Lumpkin of Georgia, that, if the wisdom of their friends in the non-slaveholding States could not devise ways to stay the fury of the Abolitionists, the slaveholding States must execute their laws, and punish the Abolitionists in the most exemplary manner.

The Senate, on motion of Mr. Allen of Ohio, modified Mr. Smith's amendment so as to declare that nothing in the resolutions was intended to recognize the right of Congress to impair the freedom of speech within the States. Mr. Smith further opposed the resolutions, saying he would extend to the South the full force of their constitutional guaranties in the protection of their domestic institutions as they were. He wished the senators representing that interest to understand distinctly that he would "cavil on the ninth part of a hair on any question going to extend the principles or boundary of slavery one inch." Mr. Benton thought the resolutions should be referred to a select committee, to report at a future day. Mr. Calhoun objected to that suggestion, saying that they were reposing on a volcano; and that his resolutions presented the only ground on which the country could stand. "The assaults

daily made," he said, "on the institutions of nearly one half of the States of the Union by the other will and must, if continued, make two people of one by destroying every sympathy between the two great sections."

It was proposed by Mr. Preston of South Carolina to discard the words "immoral and sinful"; but Mr. Calhoun would not consent to do so, declaring abolitionism to be "nothing else than religious fanaticism." "The Abolitionists," he said, "assail slavery because it is wicked and sinful, and I wish to meet them distinctly on that point." Mr. Buchanan was in favor of referring the resolutions to a select committee. He, too, declared that the Abolitionists had postponed the cause of emancipation in three or four of the States for half a century. He opposed emancipation in the District, and said if it were free it would become a city of refuge to the Abolitionists — a secure asylum, where they could scatter "arrows, firebrands, and death."

Mr. Davis of Massachusetts remarked that the worst that could be said of the Abolitionists by their bitterest enemies is what is actually said: that they are deluded, misguided philanthropists, fanatics, heated with an unbecoming zeal. Opprobrious epithets had been applied to them; but no one affirmed that they aimed at disunion, or imputed to them corrupt purposes. He said the slave interest held the destinies of the Republic in its hands; that it ruled, guided, and adapted public policy to its own views. Mr. Niles of Connecticut affirmed, if the abolition party should prevail, and abolition principles should triumph, there would follow reproaches, criminations and recriminations, agitation, alarm, and confusion, and real or supposed aggressions would be offered and repelled; but the Union would stand.

Mr. Bayard of Delaware thought he saw disunion in the resolutions, and he moved to strike out "the several States," and insert "the people of the United States." Mr. Pierce of New Hampshire said there were indications in New England of a change of public sentiment, and he feared the elements of still greater changes were in active operation. The Abolitionists proper were not gaining ground; but politics

were beginning to mingle with that question. The Abolitionists were making it a test; and he saw with profound regret, that individuals of both parties were submitting to their catechism. Mr. Crittenden pronounced the resolutions "vague and general abstractions, more calculated to produce agitation than to do good."

Mr. Clay had little confidence in the healing virtues of the resolutions. They had been offered to revive and rally the States Rights party; but he thought the slaveholding States ought not to place their interests in the exclusive keeping of any one party. He submitted a series of resolutions as an amendment. So much of Mr. Clay's resolutions as referred to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia was adopted, in lieu of Mr. Calhoun's. They did not deny the constitutional power of Congress to abolish slavery in the District, or prohibit it in the Territories, but based all opposition thereto on the expediency of such legislation at that time. It was during this debate, which excited at that time little attention, but the importance of which was afterward seen, that Mr. Calhoun admitted that he had been, in 1820, in favor of the Missouri Compromise, and had censured Mr. Randolph for his opposition. But he had been taught his error, he said, and he took pleasure in acknowledging it.

Although the domestic slave-trade was actively prosecuted in the District of Columbia, and scenes continued to be enacted there dishonoring a Christian people and outraging alike their sense of justice and their national pride, still the inexorable Slave Power persistently demanded that their prayers should remain unheeded, and that the voices of their representatives should not be heard.

The second session of the XXVth Congress commenced in December, 1838. A caucus of the Democratic party was immediately held to decide the course to be pursued upon the vexed and threatening question. Resolutions were drawn up, and Mr. Atherton of New Hampshire was selected to present them to the House. Being presented, the previous question on their adoption was ordered. A separate vote on each resolution being ordered, the first, declaring that Congress had no



power over slavery in the States, was adopted by a vote of one hundred and ninety-four to six. In this small minority was Mr. Adams, who held that in case of war the government would have power to abolish slavery, in order that the nation might be saved ; a doctrine abundantly verified and illustrated by recent events.

The second resolution, declaring that petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District were intended indirectly to destroy it in the States, was agreed to. The last resolution, requiring that " every petition, memorial, resolution, proposition, or paper touching or relating, in any way, or to any extent whatever, to slavery or the abolition thereof, shall, on presentation, without any further action thereon, be laid upon the table, without being debated, printed, or referred," was adopted by a vote of one hundred and thirty-six to seventy-three. This resolution was known as the " Atherton gag " ; though it was suspected that the New Hampshire senator was but the hand, while Mr. Calhoun was the brain.

The members who had voted against this suppression of the freedom of debate and the right of petition being nearly all of them Northern Whigs, their action enabled the Southern Democrats to question the fidelity of the Southern Whigs to slavery. Consequently, many Southern Whigs were anxious to have it appear that they were more devoted to that interest than their Democratic rivals. Henry A. Wise, then in full fellowship with the Whig party, made most earnest efforts to reassure its Southern wing of the fidelity of the national party. Among other extreme propositions made by him were those declaring that petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District or in the Territories " were in violation of the Federal Constitution " ; and that slaveholding citizens had the right to take their slaves voluntarily to and through non-slaveholding States, and to " sojourn and remain with them temporarily in any of the States." An unsuccessful effort was made by Mr. Slade of Vermont to introduce a series of resolutions rescinding a portion of those introduced by Mr. Atherton.

During this session, a Maryland slaveholder, mounted on horseback, armed with pistols, and bearing the plantation

whip, marched by the Capitol about thirty men, in double files, each fastened by the wrist to a long chain passing between them from front to rear. Several women followed in the same order, but without the chain. This sad and mournful procession, illustrating the revolting barbarism of the slave traffic in the nation's capital, was shielded by the Democratic party and the Southern Whigs, not only from unfriendly legislation, but also from the criticisms of the humane and the just. Mr. Slade submitted a resolution, reciting the facts of the disgraceful spectacle, and proposing a committee to report what legislation might be necessary to prevent the recurrence of such scenes. But the Speaker promptly decided that the resolution came within the restrictions of the "Atherton gag." While a scene of this character could not be discussed or even inquired into, a petition of the mayor of Washington and other individuals against the reception of antislavery petitions was presented by Mr. Moore of New York, a representative of what was then called the "subterranean Democracy," and he was permitted to speak at length in denunciation of the Whigs as Abolitionists. He characterized the Whig party as the Federal party; saying that it had joined the Abolitionists for the purpose of conferring on the black laborer nominal freedom, and on the white laborer virtual bondage.

Early in 1839 Mr. Clay presented petitions from citizens of the District of Columbia, praying Congress to suppress all agitation in that body touching slavery and the slave-trade in the District. Appealing to the Searcher of all hearts that every pulsation of his heart beat high in the cause of civil liberty, Mr. Clay denied that Congress had the authority to prohibit the removal of slaves from one slave State to another. He emphatically declared that "that is property which the law declares to be property," that "two hundred years of legislation have sanctioned and sanctified negro slaves as property." Mr. Clay was the acknowledged leader of the Whig party, an aspirant for the presidency, with hosts of devoted friends anxious for his elevation to that exalted position. During the first years of his political life he had been in favor of making Kentucky a free State; and though

he had rendered great service to the slaveholding class, it was thought by ardent friends that these early views and his broad and national spirit would be a source of weakness in the then excited state of Southern sentiment and feeling. Whether Mr. Clay acted from his own impulses or by the advice of friends in throwing the weight of his acknowledged influence into the scale in favor of slavery and the Slave Power, he not only did wrong, but he clearly committed a great political blunder. His speech, highly complimented by Mr. Calhoun, gave great offence to antislavery men, and was deeply regretted by the Quakers and thousands of the Whig party, in whose bosoms still lingered the hope, even in those days of its supremacy, that the Slave Power would yet be broken and its paralyzing and perilous influence pass away.

Two days afterward, Mr. Morris, a Democratic senator from Ohio, on presenting memorials against slavery and the slave-trade, defended the Abolitionists from the criticisms of Mr. Clay, and denounced the treatment their petitions for the exercise of a clear constitutional power had received in the Senate. He made an elaborate speech, closing with the declaration that "the negro will yet be set free." He reminded the Senate that he had been condemned at home for his opposition to slavery; but he hoped, on returning to that home, to join his friends in rekindling the beacon-fires of liberty on every hill.

In the same body Mr. Prentiss of Vermont presented the resolutions of the legislature of that State in favor of abolishing slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia and in the Territories; and also in opposition to the annexation of Texas. On making the usual motion to print them, Mr. Calhoun declared his astonishment that the people of Vermont did not see that their action struck at the very foundation of the Union. Other senators assailing the action of the State, the Senate, on the motion of Mr. Lumpkin of Georgia, laid the motion to print the resolutions on the table; and this insult was designedly offered to Vermont for her early and unequivocal declarations for freedom.

The XXVIth Congress met in December, 1839. The organization of the House was delayed for several days, but was at



length effected by the election of Robert M. T. Hunter of Virginia for Speaker. He was a follower of Mr. Calhoun, though elected by the Whig party. On the 30th of December Mr. Wise introduced a resolution declaring that any petition for the abolition of slavery should be considered as objected to, and the question of its reception should be laid upon the table without debate. The motion to suspend the rules to receive the resolution failing, notice was given by Mr. Wise that he should object to the reception of petitions, and move to lay the question of reception on the table. Mr. Rice Garland of Louisiana moved to suspend the rules, to allow him to present resolutions declaring that the abolition of slavery in the District would be a violation of the plighted faith of the nation, and that abolition petitions should not be considered ; but his motion was not sustained by the House. Mr. Wise the next day made another unavailing effort to introduce his resolutions, and like efforts were made by other members, but without success.

In January, 1840, Mr. Thompson of South Carolina introduced a resolution that all papers touching slavery should be laid on the table without being read or debated. He closed his speech in its behalf by moving the previous question. Francis Granger of New York expressed his admiration of the chivalry of the gentleman who would thus cut off all reply. The motion for the previous question being withdrawn, Mr. Granger vindicated the right of petition, and warned Southern members that, if they continued to deny that right, they would find enlisted under the banner of abolitionism gallant spirits of the North, who would never yield. Mr. Gentry of Tennessee said he would vote against Mr. Thompson's resolution, and for the resolution of Mr. Chinn of Louisiana for a select committee. The next day, Mr. Cooper of Georgia said that his State would act for herself, and resort to measures within her own power to put an end to abolition petitions. Mr. Botts of Virginia, a new member and a Whig of enlarged and national views, advocated the reception and reference of abolition petitions. Mr. Slade defined and vindicated the principles of the opponents of slavery ; and Mr. Butler of South Carolina ex-

pressed the belief that slavery was defensible from Scripture, and that it was a blessing.

It was then moved by Mr. Adams, as an amendment of the twenty-first rule of the House, that every petition presented be received, unless objection to it be made for a special reason ; and that, whenever objection should be made, the name of the member making it and the reasons therefor be entered on the journal, so that the question would then be : " Shall the petition be rejected ? " Mr. Adams spoke earnestly in favor of the reception of the antislavery petitions, although he did not believe, he said, that there were ten members who would vote for the abolition of slavery in the District. He declared that he was not himself prepared to vote for it, and had so stated at a previous session. The debate was continued several days, when William Cost Johnson, a Whig member from Maryland, moved to amend Mr. Adams's amendment, so that no paper praying for the abolition of slavery in the District, or in the Territories, or for the inhibition of the slave-trade, should be entertained by the House in any way whatever. This was agreed to, and the amendment as then amended was adopted.

The general unrest and excitement of the Southern mind at this time were increased by other causes than the proceedings of Northern agitators. The course of England had largely contributed to this result. Her West India emancipation, her refusal to pay for slaves who had found refuge in some of her ports, the activity of her abolition societies and presses, and their outspoken sympathy with those of this country, the unreserved admission by some of her leading statesmen of their desire for universal abolition, excited Southern fears and indignation.

These feelings were intensified by the reception in 1840 of a circular letter to the governors of the slaveholding States from the World's Convention, assembled in London for the avowed purpose of promoting the universal abolition of slavery and the slave-trade. It was signed by the venerable and illustrious Thomas Clarkson. Setting forth the evils of slavery and the slave-trade, it expressed the conviction that the only way to extinguish the former was to abolish the latter.

It appealed to the governors of the slaveholding States "to employ all that influence and power with which Divine Providence had intrusted them to secure immediate liberty to the slave." Recognizing the brotherhood of man, and the binding obligations of Christianity, it addressed its appeals to the reason, heart, and conscience. By request, Seth M. Gates, then a member of the House of Representatives at Washington, forwarded these circulars, under his own frank, to the governors thus addressed. Governor Pennington of New Jersey, Speaker of the House at the opening of the Rebellion, to whom the circular had been sent, slavery not being then quite extinct in his State, acknowledged, in a letter to Mr. Gates, the importance of the principles therein enunciated, and expressed his earnest desire that the country, at the earliest day, should join hand in hand with the humane on the other side of the water "in washing out the stain upon her national character."

But the governors of the Southern States professed to be greatly exasperated. Some of them made communications to their legislatures, denouncing the circular as incendiary and calculated to excite slaves to insurrection. Among those who denounced the circular, and especially the action of Mr. Gates, was James K. Polk, Governor of Tennessee, and four years afterward elected President of the United States. He was accustomed to carry the envelope with him at the hustings, and to exhibit the frank of the "treasonable" member of Congress, who was endeavoring, he averred, to excite slaves to insurrection. He declared, too, that the contents of the circular were too wicked to be read in public. For franking this circular Mr. Gates was roundly denounced, and a reward of five hundred dollars was offered by a wealthy Georgia slaveholder for his delivery at Savannah. Such were the feelings which then swayed the Southern people, colored all their opinions, and gave direction to all their conduct. This was specially manifest in the debates on the Quintuple and Ashburton treaties.

From the year 1806 England had sought the active co-operation of the United States for the suppression of the slave-trade; but these efforts were unavailing. The American government



kept in the African waters only the inadequate force of two or three small vessels. It also steadily refused to consent to any arrangement for the right of mutual visitation and search; and the American flag, even by the acknowledgment of Mr. Stevenson, minister to the Court of St. James, was prostituted by the slave pirates of all nationalities to cover their nefarious trade.

The leading European powers seeking the entire extirpation of the infamous traffic, a treaty was formed on the 20th of December, 1841, between Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia, for the complete suppression of the African slave-trade. It was called the Quintuple Treaty. It provided that certain cruisers belonging to those countries should be instructed to visit and detain within certain specified limits merchant vessels of the other contracting parties, suspected of being engaged in the unlawful commerce, and to co-operate with each other for its complete suppression. This treaty excited much interest in the United States, on whose government, it was believed, the high contracting parties would exert their moral power in an attempt to persuade it to join the effort.

But there was existing in this country a traditional distrust of England and dislike of her policy in regard to the right of search, which had been intensified by the war of 1812, and in which the whole country largely shared. The slaveholders, irritated, if not alarmed, by the position of England on the question of slavery, shrewdly seized upon this American jealousy as a potent agency in their attempts to defeat the treaty. General Cass, then minister to France, protested, and prepared a pamphlet against its ratification. Nor is there much doubt that his influence and efforts aided the Anti-British party, which was then large and active, in securing its defeat.

On the 9th of August, 1842, what is known as the Ashburton Treaty was signed at Washington. Among its provisions was one that the United States should keep a force of eighty guns, requiring about a thousand men, on the coast of Africa, for the suppression of the slave-trade. This provision was bitterly assailed in Congress, and strenuous efforts were made to defeat it. Mr. Benton took the lead in this attempt, mingling

argument, denunciation, and sarcasm in his opposition. He spoke of it as madness and folly, — “a roaming philanthropy” that had taken the negroes of Africa for objects of protection. He characterized the President’s message accompanying the treaty as “a mass of ambiguities and obscurities.” The measure, he said, appeared to be an American proposition, but he denounced it as certainly a British proposition; “it is certainly a British proposition” that yokes America with England on the coast of Africa. He afterward avowed his purpose to defeat all appropriations for the African squadron; for it was, he said, a tribute in men, money, and ships to England for five years’ exemption from British search. The speech was a bitter and malignant assault upon England, and little creditable to its author either on the score of statesmanship or good feeling, its insinuations having been proved to be unfounded, and its prophecies remaining unfulfilled.

Mr. Buchanan also joined in the opposition, and if his denunciations were less extravagant, they were equally decided and unequivocal. Concerning the article providing for a naval force on the African coast, he complained that they were compelled to grope their way, and that “all was obscurity, all was darkness.” “Did the British government,” he inquired, “demand this sacrifice at our hands? Was it necessary to appease the wounded pride of England at the disappointment she experienced when France, our ancient and faithful ally, refused to ratify the Quintuple Treaty and identified herself with us in resisting the right of visitation and search?” He said the ratification of the treaty would be to ratify the unjust claim of the British government to be “the supreme protector of the rights of humanity.”

The treaty was also bitterly assailed by Mr. Conrad of Louisiana, afterward a member of Mr. Fillmore’s cabinet, and an actor in the slaveholders’ rebellion. The executive committee of the American Antislavery Society, fearing that one of the provisions of the treaty would endanger the safety of the colored people of Canada, many of whom were fugitives from slavery, appointed a committee to wait upon Lord Ashburton to confer with him upon the subject. He assured them

that he had taken every precaution in behalf of the people of color; and that, if he had been willing to introduce an article providing for the payment of escaping slaves, it would not have been ratified at home, as his government was especially solicitous to guard all such rights against infringement. Mr. Conrad referred to this conference as evidence of a connection between the Abolitionists of Great Britain and of this country. Nor did he think that peace could be permanent so long as these agitating questions remained unsettled. He thought, indeed, that the forbearance of this government would increase the intolerance of Great Britain. "She will," he said, "unfurl the banner of abolition still more conspicuously before the eyes of your slaves; she will accustom them to consider her as their benefactor, the champion of their rights, the avenger of their wrongs. And when war does come, as come it will, she may then hope to realize her threat of being welcomed by them as their deliverer, and her flag, when it appears, becoming the signal of a servile insurrection." Other members of Congress and a portion of the press joined in denouncing this provision of the treaty as a surrender of American rights, an annual tribute, "a prostration of the interests and rights of American citizens, and a dishonor to the American name." The treaty, however, notwithstanding this violent opposition, was ratified, receiving the strong vote of thirty-nine to nine.

Nor was failure all. The men and presses who stood forth so prominent and so violent in opposition gained little credit by their factious course. Many saw their true character, but none more fitly described them than Rufus Choate, who spoke of them as "restless, selfish, reckless, 'the cankers of a calm world and a long peace,' pining with thirst of notoriety, slaves to their hatred of England, to whom the treaty is distasteful; to whom any treaty and all things but the glare and clamor, the vain pomp and hollow circumstance, the toil and agony and inadequate results of war, — all but those would be distasteful and dreary."



## CHAPTER XXIX.

### DISSENSION AMONG THE ABOLITIONISTS. — DISRUPTION OF THE AMERICAN ANTISLAVERY SOCIETY.

Increase of the Abolitionists. — Dissensions. — New York Abolitionists vote for Seward. — Opposition of Mr. Goodell. — New Party proposed by Mr. Smith. — Action of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society. — Young Men's Antislavery State Convention at Worcester. — Resolution. — Political Action. — The Woman Question. — Pastoral Letter. — New England Convention. — Protest of Mr. Torrey. — Memorial to the Churches. — Action of the Rhode Island Consociation. — Churches and Ministers. — The Abolitionists. — Controversy between the Massachusetts and National Antislavery Societies. — Opinion of Mr. Birney. — Sixth Anniversary. — The Woman Question. — New England Antislavery Convention. — Massachusetts Abolition Society. — Address of the Society. — Bitter Controversy. — Financial Action. — Proposition to dissolve the American Antislavery Society. — Sale of the "Emancipator." — Seventh Anniversary of the American Antislavery Society. — Rights of Woman conceded. — Disruption. — American and Foreign Antislavery Society organized. — Both Societies appeal to the Public.

THE imperious demands of the South, summoning the people of the North to surrender the moral right of discussing slavery and the issues growing out of its existence; the threats to imbrue their hands in the blood of all Abolitionists who should set their feet on Southern soil; the violent denunciations of Northern meetings, bringing upon antislavery men not only words of sternest condemnation but acts of personal violence; the denial of the right of petition and of freedom of debate in Congress, — did not quench the zeal nor silence the voice of the men who had consecrated themselves to the work of emancipation. There was no faltering in their ranks. These devoted men calmly and firmly met the issues imposed upon them. They realized, as the storms of denunciation beat upon their heads, that slavery was a crime never to be tolerated in silence.

In the third annual report of the American Antislavery Society, in May, 1836, they proclaimed to the country that the field before them was one of certain conquest. Admitting that every inch of the way was to be fought through odium and proscription, that they might suffer far more reproach and violence than they had yet experienced, that even death itself might come to them, they proclaimed the strength of their cause to be in the blessing of that God who hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the mighty.

Nor were they less hopeful and confident at the fourth and fifth anniversary meetings of the national society. Their fifth annual report, of May, 1838, closes with the declaration that in the prosecution of the cause of human liberty by truth and brotherly love they could never tire nor doubt of success. "Our victory," they say, "is no less sure than the laws of seed-time and harvest; and, though tears may mingle with the seed which is now scattered amidst the frosts and snows of retiring winter, the sheaves shall yet be brought home with shouts of unmingled joy and the sunshine of unclouded peace."

At this anniversary meeting Edmund Quincy proclaimed their warfare to be no wild crusade, but a holy war, a sacred strife; waged not with arms forged by human hands or tempered in earthly fire, "but with weapons fresh from the armory of God. In this contest the green hills of our land are crowned with no mimic volcanoes, sending up from their summits smoke and flame toward heaven, and pouring down their slopes lava-streams of hideous death. The kingdom for which we struggle and where we strive is an invisible kingdom, — its foundations are laid in the hearts and souls of men. It is an empire whose limits reach beyond the flaming walls of the universe, its heights reach up to heaven, its depths descend to hell, its origin is derived from God, its destiny is infinite, its duration eternal. And what are the weapons which we wield in this heavenly conflict? Prayer, which takes heaven by storm; faith, which grasps the palm of victory ere the battle is begun; the Word of God, which makes straight the way to triumph, — which fills up the valleys and brings low the moun-

tains which obstruct our march. Clothed in this panoply, let us press onward to the rescue of our captive brethren, cheerful in the certainty of success, invincible in the justice of our cause, strong in the presence of the Lord. And at last may our voices help to swell the triumphant shout, bursting from millions of hearts on earth, and answered from the battlements of heaven, which shall proclaim that the victory is won, that the slave is free ! ”

In these glowing expressions of trust in God, faith in moral power, and confidence in a peaceful triumph, Mr. Quincy but echoed the sentiments of the noble men and women assembled at that anniversary, and of the leaders of the antislavery cause throughout the land. Little did he or they foresee, when he gave utterance to these hopes of a peaceful triumph for their sacred cause, that the heart of the nation would be so hardened and its passions so inflamed by slavery, in its struggle for dominion, that, a quarter of a century afterward, the green hills of the land would be crowned by flaming batteries and her fields drenched in the blood of embattled hosts, and that the liberty of the slave would be proclaimed amid the darkening storms of civil war.

But in spite of the stern and relentless opposition encountered by the Abolitionists, they increased in numbers, influence, and power. In consequence, however, of that increase, diversities of opinion began to appear. These became more and more marked and defined, dissensions arose, and divisions speedily followed.

Nor were these dissensions and divisions a matter of surprise. When the New England Antislavery Society was organized, its members united in declaring themselves in favor of using all means sanctioned by law, humanity, and religion, to effect the abolition of slavery. The National Antislavery Society began its existence by proclaiming that the highest obligation rested upon Abolitionists to remove slavery by moral and political action. Few in numbers, with their eyes intently fixed on the crime and wrongs of slavery, and the pressing necessity of immediate abolition, they were for a time united in sentiment, feeling, and purpose. As their numbers increased



and they began to consider the problem of emancipation as a practical measure, more difficulties revealed themselves. These difficulties, while they intensified feeling and inspired zeal and courage, were little calculated to secure unity of thought or harmony of action. Men who, under these untoward circumstances, accepted the unpopular doctrine of immediate abolition, and entered upon the self-sacrificing work it imposed, were not generally the men to yield to the dictates of committees or the decrees of conventions. The very elements of character which made them reformers rendered them positive, sometimes dogmatic and impracticable. Generally with strong conscientious convictions, marked individuality, and not infrequent idiosyncrasies of character, they did not always wisely discriminate between the essentials and non-essentials of the conflict. Some looked chiefly to moral, others to political action; some to ecclesiastical, and others to governmental agencies. Meeting opposition where they had too confidently anticipated aid, some left churches and parties, and strove to found those of a purer and more legitimate character; while others disowned them altogether, adopting loose and disorganizing opinions concerning all governments and ecclesiastical institutions. Others still — a few, indeed — entertained the wildest vagaries and the most fantastic notions, and burdened the cause by giving occasion to those who were glad to find it an opportunity to associate their extravagances with the true issue.

Many things conspired to develop these dissensions and differences, which began to manifest themselves in 1838 with painful distinctness. Chief among these was the question of exercising the right of suffrage. In the annual report of the American Antislavery Society for that year, signed by James G. Birney, Elizur Wright, Jr., and Henry B. Stanton, corresponding secretaries, the declaration was made that Abolitionists should inquire into the sentiments of candidates for office, and that he was unworthy the name of an Abolitionist who did not put the antislavery qualification above all others in selecting candidates to receive his vote. This duty was emphatically declared to be vital to the cause. In the autumn of

the same year, many Abolitionists in Central and Western New York gave their votes for William H. Seward for governor. These antislavery men had been trained in the Whig party. They were not ignorant of Mr. Seward's real feelings and sentiments, although his answers to their questionings had not been on all points satisfactory. Entertaining the idea that his election over Governor Marcy, whose adverse opinions had been clearly pronounced and unequivocal, and whose action had been exceedingly offensive, would contribute largely, as it certainly did, to the development of opposition to the Slave Power, they cast their suffrages for him. But this action was deeply regretted by many Abolitionists, and stoutly opposed by some of the leading antislavery men in that section, especially by William Goodell, editor of the "Friend of Man," at Utica, and by Gerrit Smith.

Not a little discouraged by this demonstration, Mr. Smith proposed a new antislavery organization, whose constitution and laws should require antislavery men not to vote for those men who refuse to avow their belief in the duty of immediate deliverance from the yoke of slavery. He thought that, if such an organization was formed, the old antislavery societies, like the wine-tolerating temperance societies, would speedily fall, and that it would be understood that a member of an antislavery society would, under no circumstances, "vote for a slaveholder, or a slaveholder's apologist." He thought, too, that members of the new society, unlike the old ones, would act in concert with each other. These suggestions were accepted by many who saw that the antislavery cause demanded political action, and who were dissatisfied with the existing society.

But the great body of Abolitionists regretted and resisted that movement. The Massachusetts Antislavery Society denied the competency of any antislavery organization, either by its votes or through its organs, to arraign the political or religious views of its members. It denied their right to insist that it was the duty of any Abolitionist to go to the ballot-box or unite with any church. It admitted that there were conflicting opinions entertained by Abolitionists on these points,

but strenuously maintained that "all that a society or its organs may rightfully do is to entreat its members to abide by their principles, whether in the church or out of it, at the polls or elsewhere ; to vote for no man who is not in favor of immediate emancipation ; to listen to no preacher who apologizes for slavery." Believing that such an organization would present no new motive for action, and advance no new principles ; that it would wear a political, rather than a moral aspect ; and that existing antislavery societies were slowly but surely effecting great and salutary changes both in Church and State, it announced its opposition to the adoption "of a doubtful and untried experiment."

Early in October of that year, while this division of sentiment and action was in progress in Central and Western New York, a Young Men's Antislavery Convention, consisting of more than four hundred delegates, met in the city of Worcester, Massachusetts. The convention was called to order by Oliver Johnson, and was presided over by George T. Davis, then a young lawyer and rising politician of Franklin County, who early accepted antislavery sentiments, but whose adherence did not long withstand the claims of his political associations. This body, of which nearly all the leading Abolitionists were members, adopted a series of resolutions drawn by William Goodell. It unanimously declared by a rising vote that by the grace of God no motive of political expediency or partisan interest, of personal friendship or any other consideration, should tempt them to vote for slavery by voting for a member of the national or State legislatures who would not go to the utmost verge of constitutional power for its abolition. This body pledged all who held it proper in any case to exercise the right of suffrage never to neglect any opportunity to record their vote against slavery. This decided action of the Worcester convention, the action in Western New York, the proposition of Gerrit Smith for the reorganization of antislavery societies, and the address of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society revealed the unquestionable fact that the largest portion of the Abolitionists believed in political action in some form.



Nevertheless, a small but active portion of the Abolitionists, mostly in New England, more or less tinctured with the non-resistant theories, were opposed to the exercise of the right of suffrage. Abjuring all resort to force, on which governments necessarily rest, they, by logical sequence, declined the use of the ballot. Though undoubtedly conscientious in their course, they not only yielded up an element of power, potent in a government resting on the will and votes of the people, which they had no right to relinquish, but by so doing they weakened their own effective influence upon the people, however truthful, earnest, and vivid were their delineations of slavery and their arraignments of the Slave Power.

Another question on which the Abolitionists divided was what is familiarly called the "woman question." Women early espoused the antislavery cause. They were not at first either officers or members of the national or State societies; but, organizing associations of their own, they entered upon their work with zeal and effectiveness. Several ladies who had spoken at meetings of their own sex with much acceptance, afterward addressed promiscuous assemblies. Some earnest antislavery men, however, doubted its propriety; while proslavery individuals and presses condemned it. This voice of remonstrance found expressive utterance in the Pastoral Letter of the Massachusetts Association of Congregational Ministers, in the year 1837. In this letter very special mention was made of the Misses Grimké, Quaker ladies from South Carolina, who had been slaveholders, had emancipated their slaves, and, having warmly espoused the cause of emancipation, were addressing delighted auditories in the Northern States.

At the annual meeting of the New England Antislavery Convention in 1838, which was attended by delegates from eleven States, it was voted that all persons present, whether men or women, who agreed with the convention on the subject of slavery should be invited to become members, and participate in its proceedings. A motion to rescind this vote, after a long and animated discussion, failed by a large majority. Eight clergymen immediately arose and desired that their names should be stricken from the roll of the convention. A protest was drawn

up and signed by Charles T. Torrey, Amos A. Phelps, and five others, against this action of the convention. They pronounced it injurious to the cause of the slave, by connecting with it a subject foreign to it; by establishing the precedent of connecting with it other and irrelevant topics; and by being an innovation on former usages. They therefore disclaimed all responsibility for it. This decision of the convention excited much interest and caused no little ill feeling.

Three persons were appointed by the convention — one of them Miss Abby Kelley, a member of the Society of Friends — as a committee to prepare a memorial to the ecclesiastical associations of New England, beseeching them to testify against the slave system. This memorial was drawn with great care, was respectful in form, and in no way infringed upon the rights and privileges of any ecclesiastical association. It earnestly called upon the ecclesiastical bodies of New England in the name of God to remember them in bonds as bound with them, and entreated them to act as the great interests of humanity and Christ's kingdom demanded.

When this memorial was presented to the Rhode Island Congregational Consociation, and it became known that a woman was a member of the committee that drafted it, a scene of intense excitement arose. Members hastened to quote Scripture against this action of women; others, who were willing at first to receive the memorial and act upon it, on learning that a woman was upon the committee that drafted it, "united," said the editor of the "Christian Mirror," who was present, "at once in turning the illegitimate product from the house, and in obliterating from the record all traces of its entrance."

This action of an association of New England clergymen seems, in the light of subsequent events and change of public sentiment, narrow and bigoted, trivial and weak. But there can be no question that this controversy in the antislavery ranks influenced to a considerable extent a large number of clergymen. The "Emancipator," the organ of the American Antislavery Society, referring to the fact that a few months previous it seemed as if the mass of the clergy were ready to

drop their hostility to the antislavery cause and come in to its support, expressed the fear that many of the ministers of the gospel were "settling down into a fixed hatred of the principles of liberty, and fixed determination, at any hazard, to maintain the lawfulness of slavery, and the criminality of efforts for its removal. They are evincing a readiness to abandon any principle, to impugn any doctrine, to violate any obligation, to outrage any feeling, to sacrifice any interest, heretofore held dear or sacred, if it be found to afford countenance or strength to antislavery."

The "Liberator" had been established by Mr. Garrison, was under his exclusive control, and, of course, expressed his views. In the exercise of his prerogative he uttered and admitted sentiments to which a large number of Abolitionists did not subscribe. While he did not claim that these views were any part of the antislavery creed, and did not insist that antislavery men should accept them as such, still the public mind did, more or less, associate the sentiments enunciated in his journal with the cause of abolition. Many antislavery men, too, deeming them injurious not only to interests they regarded important and sacred, but also to the cause itself, desired the establishment of a new journal. The "Abolitionist," under the editorial charge of Elizur Wright, Jr., was therefore established, in the spring of 1839, in the city of Boston.

A controversy had arisen between the managers of the American and Massachusetts antislavery societies. Owing to the financial distress of the country, the failure of the Tappans, who had been large contributors themselves, and who had been greatly instrumental in securing contributions from others, and the growing distrust, dissensions, and divisions among Abolitionists, the receipts of the national and associate societies did not keep pace with their necessities. Objection was made by the State associations to the sending of collecting agents into their respective limits by the national society. An arrangement had been entered into between the national and Massachusetts societies by which ten thousand dollars were to be paid into the treasury of the former by the latter. The Massachusetts Society, however, failed to redeem its pledge.



This failure intensified somewhat the feeling of distrust which had already unfortunately begun to manifest itself. The executive committee at New York notified the Massachusetts Society that it should send collecting agents into that State. This decision excited much feeling, and Mr. Chapman, the treasurer of the State society, was sent to protest against that action, and secure, if possible, some amicable arrangement.

At the quarterly meeting, held in March, 1837, the action of the board of managers was triumphantly sustained. Mr. Birney, Lewis Tappan, and Mr. Stanton were present and vindicated the action of the national committee. An excited and somewhat angry debate arose. Mr. Birney declared with emphasis, that, "if one whose conscientious scruples led him to repudiate the elective franchise were to consult him about joining the American Antislavery Society, he should be bound to tell him he had not the qualifications prescribed by the constitution, and, therefore, ought not to subscribe." This declaration, which would exclude the come-outers and non-resistants from membership in the American Antislavery Society, created the deepest feeling in the bosoms of those who had adopted those theories, and it sensibly increased the alienation already existing. A division of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society was recommended by Lewis Tappan, who did not hesitate to express the opinion that the separation of men who had so little unity of opinion would not only be promotive of peace, but of greater efficiency. At the close of the meeting an appeal was made to the public by the board of managers of the Massachusetts Society, and by extraordinary exertions their pledge was redeemed within a few weeks.

The sixth annual meeting of the American Antislavery Society took place early in May, in the city of New York. A large number were in attendance. At the opening of the meeting a motion was made for the appointment of a committee to make out a roll of delegates. James C. Fuller, a delegate from New York, an Englishman by birth, and a member of the Society of Friends, remarked that there were some beloved sisters present, and he wished to know whether there was strength enough in the meeting to admit them. Nathaniel

Colver, a Baptist clergyman, then moved that the roll be made out in the usual manner, of such men as were delegates or members. It was then moved by Oliver Johnson to strike out the word "men" and insert that of persons. This amendment led to a very long, animated, and excited debate, in which a large number of the leading members of the convention participated. Intimations were thrown out that, if the amendment was sustained, a division of the society might be the consequence. Mr. Johnson's amendment was then declared adopted; but, the ayes and noes having been demanded by Lewis Tappan, it was adopted, as modified by an amendment of Ellis Gray Loring, by a large majority. A protest, signed by one hundred and twenty-three delegates, was then presented and ordered to be printed with the records.

The Sixth New England Antislavery Convention met a few days afterward, in Boston. At the opening of the convention it was moved that all persons present favorable to the cause of immediate emancipation be invited to take part in the proceedings. An amendment was moved by Mr. Phelps, inviting all gentlemen present to take seats. But this amendment was rejected by a very large majority. Many delegates then retired from the convention, and then united in forming the Massachusetts Abolition Society. Thus was consummated a separation which had long been foreshadowed by growing divisions of sentiment and increasing alienation of feeling. It was of course inevitable, but nevertheless to be deprecated. Before the giant evil they would overthrow, if united, they were less than the stripling youth of Israel; in the presence of the hostile multitude they were at best but a lean minority. But the bond of union was broken, and much of the power and prowess which should have borne only on the common foe was wasted on each other.

The executive committee of the new society issued an address to the people in explanation and vindication of their action. They expressed their unspeakable grief at "the perversion, in this State, of our association to purposes and objects not contemplated in our bond of union, foreign to our original objects, not necessary to their attainment, and, in the

view of the reflecting, fatal to our prospects of ultimate success." They charged that the old Antislavery Society had become identified with the sectarian views of a few of its leading members; and that the theories of Mr. Garrison about religion and government, which had been sanctioned by it, took from it "the staff of accomplishment." They charged that the society "had thrown away its principles, and with them the staff of its power." They declared the difference between the old and new antislavery organizations to be that "the new organization proposes to overthrow slavery by the use of means, the old by simple truth."

Leading advocates of the new organization arraigned the old society with great plainness of speech. Amos A. Phelps, one of the earliest and ablest of the writers, orators, and organizers of the antislavery movement, in resigning his membership of its board of managers, said: "The society is no longer an antislavery society simply, but in its principles and modes of action has become a woman's-rights, non-government, antislavery society." He avowed his readiness, whenever it should return to its original principles and policy, to co-operate with it again. Rev. Orange Scott, an early Abolitionist, said that Mr. Garrison and the members of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society had, during the past two years, done little but press their notions of perfectionism, their opposition to all human governments and institutions, and crowd forward the women into all public stations. He affirmed that the principles and measures of himself and those with whom he acted were the same as they were when they joined that society, — "We have not left our brethren; they have left us." Rev. Alanson St. Clair referred to the members of the old organization as "our women's-rights, no-government, antislavery opponents"; and Rev. Charles T. Torrey averred that they had toiled with the members of that society as long as honor and conscience would permit, and they had separated from them that they might "continue to assert all our original principles and urge all our original measures with new zeal and greater energy."

To these accusations and others of like import the Massa-



chusetts Antislavery Society, its officers and members, by resolutions, reports, addresses, speeches, and presses, interposed a peremptory and emphatic denial. To the charge that it had become subservient to the principles of non-resistance it declared that it was not competent for the society to determine whether they were right or wrong. It denied the right of any member to commit it to his peculiar political or religious views; but he, by consenting to become a member, did not surrender his right to proselytize to the extent of his ability, apart from abolitionism, as a man or a Christian, either as a member of any sect or party, or as one who stands aloof from all sects or parties. They denied that the Massachusetts Antislavery Society had ever departed from its original platform, and they avowed that it continued to maintain that duty to God and humanity required of its members fidelity to their antislavery principles in whatever sphere they might be called to act,—“in the church or out of it, at the ballot-box or away from it.” They maintained, too, that the society had been careful to abstain from all interference with the disputed question of woman’s sphere and capacity; that they did not seek the question, but that it had forced itself upon them, and they had only sought to deal with the question of the rights of its female members “in a practical, inoffensive, and common-sense way.” In a word, they maintained that on their platform all human beings were allowed to meet on equal terms, and were required to “agree in nothing but the inherent sinfulness of slaveholding and the immediate duty of letting the oppressed go free.”

The action of the American Antislavery Society at its annual meeting in 1839 had greatly impaired its unity and influence. Women had been permitted to take part in its proceedings, though more than one third of its members had entered their protest against it. A resolution had been reported by the business committee, affirming that the society held, as it had done from the beginning, that the employment of the political franchise so as to promote the abolition of slavery was a duty Abolitionists owed to their enslaved fellow-countrymen groaning under legal oppression. An amendment was offered by Charles C. Burleigh, to the effect that the

Abolitionist who regards it his duty to use the elective franchise, and who used it against or neglected to use it for the promotion of the cause of emancipation, was false to his own principles and clearly failed to do his duty. The original resolution was sustained by only a majority of seven. This action of the society, in regard to woman's rights and the use of the ballot, clearly revealed the fact that radical differences of opinion were entertained by its members, and that unity was, if not impossible, in the highest degree improbable. But the heaviest blow struck against the efficiency of the society was its action on the financial question. Its finance committee reported in favor of raising thirty-two thousand dollars for the current expenses of the year ; but no action whatever was taken. A resolution, however, was adopted, earnestly inviting the executive committee not to send agents into a State where a State society existed, without its consent. As the State societies had opposed the employment of such agents, the national executive committee was left with limited means to carry forward the work it had hitherto prosecuted with so much vigor and success.

The effect of this action was soon made manifest. The executive committee was greatly embarrassed. In November it was compelled to notify its agents that the society could no longer be responsible for their compensation. A special meeting was held in New York, in January, 1840 ; but the attendance was small. The object of the meeting was to obtain the removal of the restrictions upon the executive committee and to supply it with funds. The convention sat for three days without any marked results.

Under circumstances so discouraging some members of the executive committee avowed themselves in favor of reorganizing or dissolving the society. Lewis Tappan wrote to several leading Abolitionists that, as the executive committee was virtually excluded from all parts of the country for the collection of funds, he despaired of accomplishing anything for the advancement of the cause, and was in favor of abandoning the organization, and of the appointment of a central board or committee, to work with such means as might be placed in

their hands. Similar views were entertained by others. A communication was published in the "Emancipator" maintaining that the American Antislavery Society was no longer necessary for the advancement of the antislavery cause, that it was a hindrance, and that therefore it was a question for serious consideration whether it ought not to be formally withdrawn. It was proposed by the Rev. David Root that the national society and all its auxiliaries should be dissolved, and that a board of commissioners, with powers similar to those of the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," should take its place. But this was pronounced essentially defective and inadequate to the object they had in view.

John G. Whittier, then editor of the "Pennsylvania Freeman," suggested that the society should be dissolved, and a central committee, representing no society or association, but simply acting on its own responsibility, with such means as the confidence of the public might intrust to it, should be substituted for it. The reason assigned for this proposition was that the great object for which the machinery of the society was created had been measurably lost because it had failed to secure "concert of action." Dr. Bailey, editor of the "Philanthropist," concurred in these views, and proposed that at the next anniversary the national society quietly dissolve itself, so that the executive committee could be left to labor when and where it pleased, and with such means as might be placed in its hands by uncompromising Abolitionism. A special report, signed by Mr. Birney and Lewis Tappan, James S. Gibbons dissenting, recommended to the executive committee that the society, at its next annual meeting, should either resume its whole power as to funds or be formally dissolved. The executive committee, declaring its inability to continue the publication of the "Emancipator," authorized the publishing agent to sell it to the executive committee of the New York City Antislavery Society, on condition that it should supply papers to its "advanced" subscribers and continue its publication one year, under the charge of Mr. Leavitt.

The deepest interest was felt and expressed by Abolitionists



in all parts of the country, especially in New England, in the results of the seventh annual meeting, to be held in New York. The board of managers of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society issued an address appealing to the Abolitionists everywhere, in whatever part of the country they resided, to rally at that meeting as one man. They were called upon to "frown indignantly on each and every attempt to dissolve our noble organization into its original elements, for the purpose of obstructing spiritual freedom and human progress, of gratifying personal envy or ambition, of fostering the great and relentless enemy of humanity, sectarianism." "If you would not see," they said, "our broad platform in any degree narrowed, if you would preserve it from the spirit which is seeking to dash it in fragments, if you would still rally under an antisectionarian banner, and unite with the wise and good of every name for the salvation of your country and the deliverance of the oppressed, then you will throng to the anniversary of the parent society on the 12th of May next."

On that day the delegates assembled in great numbers in the city of New York. Arthur Tappan, president of the society, not being present, Francis Jackson of Boston, one of the vice-presidents, took the chair. Mrs. Lydia Maria Child was placed upon the business committee. Not being present, Lewis Tappan suggested that her place be supplied by her husband, David Lee Child. But Miss Abby Kelley being appointed in place of Mrs. Child, Mr. Tappan, Charles W. Denison, and Amos A. Phelps asked to be excused from serving on the committee. After a brief debate the sense of the meeting was taken, and the appointment of Miss Kelley was sustained by more than a hundred majority in favor of the rights of women to take part in the proceedings of the society.

In the evening a meeting was held at the house of Lewis Tappan, and it was unanimously agreed that a division was inevitable, and that a new society should be immediately organized. A committee was appointed of one from each State, of which Rev. David Thurston of Maine was chairman, to draft a constitution. During the forenoon of the next day, by the permission of the presiding officer of the society, then in

session, notice was given that a meeting of those opposed to its proceedings would be held in the afternoon in the basement of the church to consider the expediency of forming a new society. When this meeting assembled, Mr. Tappan was made chairman. The proceedings of the preliminary meeting were stated, and a resolution was adopted declaring it expedient to form such a society. During the next two days a constitution was adopted, and a society of nearly three hundred members, from eleven States, was organized. It adopted as its name, The American and Foreign Antislavery Society. Arthur Tappan was chosen president, James G. Birney and Henry B. Stanton secretaries, and Lewis Tappan treasurer. A large executive committee was appointed, of which the Tappans, Mr. Birney, Mr. Stanton, William Jackson, Whittier, Gerrit Smith, Judge Jay, Joshua Leavitt, Thomas Morris, William H. Brisbane, Edward Beecher, and many other prominent Abolitionists, were members.

An address was soon afterward issued by the president of the new society, in which the disturbing elements in the old organization were referred to, and the causes of separation were distinctly stated. Among the reasons assigned for the separation were the action of the society concerning the admission of women to take part in its proceedings, and the non-resistant and no-government views of a portion of its members. The former it declared to be an innovation that seemed "repugnant to the constitution of the society," "a firebrand in antislavery meetings," which was "contrary to the usages of the civilized world," and which "tended to destroy the efficiency of female antislavery action." Concerning the latter, it maintained that, though at its formation "the lawfulness of human government was recognized, and it was a fundamental principle that political action was both expedient and proper," the same persons who were contending for the civil and political equality of women with men "deny the obligation of forming, supporting, or yielding obedience to civil government, and refuse to affirm the duty of political action." Avowing that the members of the new society recognized the "rightfulness of government," and "urge political action as a duty," it affirmed that it would

not denounce those "as recreants" who might differ from them in regard to the "best modes of action"; and that, so far as their conduct could influence the future, the two divisions of antislavery men would henceforth plead the cause of the slave without criminating or recriminating each other. It declared that the purpose of the convention which originated the American and Foreign Antislavery Society was not to enforce uniformity of action, subject the widespread antislavery host to the decrees of one central power, follow the footsteps of any earthly leader, or glorify any man of like passions with themselves, but to labor for the speedy and peaceful triumph of liberty, and to give God all the glory. Commencing its career with these avowals of its spirit and purposes, and embracing within its ranks many men of large capacity and experience, it labored several years, and rendered service to the cause.

Lindley Coates of Pennsylvania was chosen president of the old society. The vacancies made by the retiring members were filled by men in harmony with the views of the majority. The "Antislavery Standard," with its motto, "Without concealment, without compromise," was established as its organ in the city of New York, under the editorial charge of Nathaniel P. Rogers of New Hampshire, one of their most brilliant and vigorous writers. The executive committee soon issued an address in reply to the address of the new society, in which the course of the old organization was vigorously defended, and the action of those who had seceded was sharply criticised. This society continued to advocate the cause of immediate emancipation, and to enunciate the distinctive doctrines of that section of Abolitionists which sustained the views of Mr. Garrison until slavery was abolished by the adoption of an amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

The disruption of the American Antislavery Society, and the formation of the American and Foreign Antislavery Society, excited much feeling among Abolitionists in certain localities, especially in the New England States. Mr. Goodell says of it: "While these divisions produced a strong sensation in New England and in the seaboard cities, the sound of them going



across the Atlantic and awakening kindred responses pro and con among the Abolitionists of Great Britain, the blast died away like a Massachusetts northeaster as it travelled westward, spending its strength before it had reached the Valley of the Mohawk, and was scarcely felt beyond the waters of Lake Erie."

At the time of the separation there were probably two thousand societies in the country, containing, it was estimated, some two hundred thousand members. They had, however, already attained their maximum of numbers and influence, and had accomplished the largest share of their peculiar work. Afterward their numbers and distinctive labors were diminished, rather than increased. Various causes contributed to produce that result. Such societies had lost the charm of novelty which at first had attracted some to join their ranks. Many, too, had become disheartened by the growing magnitude of the evil and the increasing difficulties which revealed themselves in the way of its overthrow. Besides, antislavery ideas and principles were finding for themselves other modes of expression and action. While, therefore, these distinctive societies were declining in numbers and efficiency, the cause for which they were originally organized was making progress.

Nevertheless these organizations, with all their divisions, dissensions, and mistakes, rendered essential service. They were the pioneers in the great work of emancipation. They were the forerunners of this modern evangel of Liberty. They sounded the alarm which awoke the slumbering nation to its dangers and its duties. They kindled and kept alive those fires of freedom that revealed more distinctly the darkening shadows which slavery was casting over the land. During the first few years of their active and arduous labors they did much to direct attention to the wrongs of the slave, the crimes of the slave system, and the dangers those wrongs and crimes involved. Though other and subsequent agencies were employed to render more available and practicable the principles of the great conflict, the honor of their first and brave proclamation will ever belong to them.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### ABOLITION PETITIONS. — ARRAIGNMENT OF MR. ADAMS. — RIGHT OF PETITION WON. — MR. ADAMS'S POSITION.

The Election of 1840. — Death of President Harrison. — President Tyler. — Mr. Adams's Motion to repeal the 21st Rule adopted. — The South warned against the Abolitionists. — President Tyler's Letter. — Thomas F. Marshall, Henry A. Wise, and Joshua R. Giddings. — Vote on 21st Rule reconsidered. — Discussion. — Petition presented by Mr. Adams. — Resolution of Censure. — Caucus. — Mr. Weld and Mr. Leavitt. — Marshall's Resolutions. — Speech. — Mr. Adams's Defence. — Remarks of Wise. — Adams's Reply. — Liberal Action of Underwood, Arnold, and Botts. — Resolution laid on the Table. — Debate in XXVIIIth Congress. — Remarks of Hale and Hamlin. — Rule abrogated and Right of Petition secured. — Position of Mr. Adams. — Criticisms of Garrison, Birney, and Goodell.

THE great political struggle of 1840 resulted in the triumph of the Whig party. It secured the Executive and majorities in both houses of Congress. But freedom gained little by the change. The Slave Power still controlled the general government. The new administration soon became quite as obsequious as the one it had displaced.

Within thirty days after entering on the duties of his office, President Harrison died. Vice-President Tyler — a Whig in name rather than in sentiment and opinion — succeeded him. General Harrison had been reared in Virginia, and educated under the malign influences of slavery. As governor of the Territory of Indiana he had striven to secure for it a temporary suspension of the ordinance of 1787. In Congress he had generally complied with the requirements of the slave-masters. In his Inaugural Address he had prepared a paragraph which would have been highly offensive to the members of his party who had advocated the right of petition and the freedom of debate; but, at the suggestion of Mr. Clay, it was so modified

as to mean little or nothing. While antislavery men had little to hope from President Harrison, they had everything to fear from President Tyler. He was an ultra slaveholder, and in feeling, sentiment, and opinion he was narrow, bigoted, and sectional.

On the 31st of May an extra session of Congress was convened. On the first day Mr. Wise moved that the rules of the last House be adopted for ten days, and that a committee of nine be appointed for their revision. Mr. Adams moved to amend the motion by inserting, "except the twenty-first rule, which is hereby rescinded." This rule excluded antislavery petitions. In support of his motion Mr. Adams gave the history of that rule, adopted when "a majority of the House were anxious above all things not to be thought Abolitionists." "It was," he said, "a Democratic measure, a measure of Northern men with Southern principles, a sectional measure." Mr. Adams's amendment was agreed to by a vote of one hundred and twelve to one hundred and four.

Mr. Charles J. Ingersoll, a Democratic politician of Pennsylvania, moved a reconsideration of that vote. Alluding to the remark of Mr. Adams that he was a Northern man, he announced himself to be a middle man. He proceeded to warn the slaveholders that the signs of the times behooved them to be more on the alert than they had ever yet been in guarding their rights against abolition; and that they had never yet taken ground as high as he would take. He said there were more than two thousand abolition societies; and he advised the South to combine and move in solid phalanx in defence of its endangered interests. In the course of the debate Mr. Adams had expressed the opinion that, if the free people of the North had nothing to do with the people of the South, they should not be called upon to aid in suppressing servile insurrections. He had also stated that, in the event of such insurrections, Congress would have the constitutional power to interfere with slavery, and would dispose of it according to the dictates of justice and humanity. Mr. Ingersoll expressed horror at the position of Mr. Adams, and proclaimed his readiness to march at any moment to suppress an insurrection of



the slaves. Mr. Johnson of Maryland said he had seen a letter from President Tyler recommending the members of the House to support the twenty-first rule. The reading of the letter was called for by Mr. Adams ; to which Mr. Johnson replied that it was not an official letter, but the President's individual opinion.

Mr. Thomas F. Marshall, a new Whig member from Kentucky, made a brilliant and characteristic speech. "I shall vote," said he, "against reconsideration. In other words, I shall vote in favor of receiving all the petitions stowed away in his abolition drawer. Why ? Because I do not want this subject coming up year after year and, it may be, century after century. I want the question settled now. I shall move that they be committed to a committee of Northern gentlemen, and the gentleman of Massachusetts placed at its head. I want to try it as a question of history. There is something poetical in the idea that the son of the man whose stalwart arms and brawny shoulders had aided in laying the corner-stone of this temple of our liberties should be the incendiary who should light the flame for its destruction."

Mr. Wise, in the course of this debate, sharply censured the Speaker, John White of Kentucky, for appointing Mr. Giddings chairman of the Committee on Claims, and Mr. Adams chairman of Committee on Foreign Affairs. He denounced the Abolitionists as "a few dangerous fanatics, unsupported, unbacked, and discountenanced by the virtue, intelligence, and patriotism of the North." He insisted that the House could not be organized until the "hydra of abolition" is crushed. This he declared to be a vital question, far surpassing all the financial and currency questions of the day. Mr. King of Georgia announced that if abolition petitions should be received, and discussion be tolerated, the Southern members would be obliged to leave their seats.

Kenneth Rayner, a Whig member from North Carolina, asked Mr. Adams if he would present a petition from Fanny Wright and her followers, praying Congress to abolish the institution of marriage. Mr. Adams replied : "Why, the most damning sin of slavery is that it does abolish the institution of marriage.

How, then, could I have any more objection to receiving such petitions than I should have to the perpetuation of slavery, which destroys the sacred institution of marriage?" Cries of order were raised, and Mr. Adams took his seat, remarking, "If the gentleman is afraid to receive answers, he should take care to ask no questions." Mr. Giddings, who afterward so signalized himself for his advocacy of the cause of equal rights, participated in the debate. Alluding to his silence, which he explained to be the result of no want of interest in the subject, but because he came there for the purpose of attending to the business for which the session was called, he declared that they were fully organized and ready to proceed to business when the motion for reconsideration was made, and they were called upon to reject all the rules they had adopted because they had rejected one. He rejoiced that Northern members had remained silent, thus giving evidence of their desire to attend to the public business, though many things had been said to which they desired to reply. Mr. Ingersoll's motion to reconsider was lost. Mr. Wise moved to reconsider the vote by which the House adopted the rules, with the exception of the twenty-first, and his motion prevailed by a majority of two.

Mr. Rayner then moved that the rules of the last House be adopted, but his motion was lost by nine majority. He spoke for three hours. In his speech he complimented very highly Northern Democrats who had voted against the right of petition. He admitted that slavery was "a misfortune to any people among whom it exists"; and yet he violently denounced those who would subvert it. "Before you accomplish your purpose," he said, "you must march over hecatombs of bodies; you must convert every one of our smiling fields into a camp; you must beat every one of your ploughshares into swords. Long, long before you reach the banks of the Roanoke, every stream will run red with your blood, every hill will whiten with your bones. Attempt this wild project when you will, and if there be any truth in heathen story, the banks of the Styx will be lined with your shivering ghosts for a hundred years to come. We will trample you under our feet, and trail your crown and sceptre in the dust."

Mr. Stuart, a Whig member from Virginia, presented a resolution that the rules of the last House not suspended by any rule or resolution adopted at that session be adopted as the rules of the House. On this motion he moved the previous question, but withdrew it at the request of Mr. Nisbet of Georgia, who wished to address the House. Referring in unequivocal and bitter words to Mr. Adams, he said: "I have listened with strong and burning indignation to the language that has been indulged in by the hoary-headed member from Massachusetts. I have been compelled to think of the Mantuan bard: —

‘*Tantæne in animis cælestibus iræ?*’

As I looked at him, throwing forth such sentiments and language, I was forcibly reminded of Vesuvius, which, while its summit was clothed in white, vomited a fiery stream, which spread desolation and ruin whence it came." Mr. Nisbet renewed the motion for the previous question, which was agreed to, and Mr. Stuart's motion was adopted.

At the regular session of the XXVIIth Congress the contest for the right of petition and freedom of debate was renewed, Mr. Adams standing forth as their inflexible champion. This action of Mr. Adams excited the bitterest animosity of members from the slaveholding States of both parties, and of Northern members sympathizing with them. The representatives of slavery affected to despise and put under the ban of social ostracism Slade, Giddings, and Gates. But the commanding ability, the historic position, and reputation of Mr. Adams, while they shielded him from their contempt, real or affected, aroused their bitterest hostility and hate.

On the 14th of January, 1842, Mr. Adams, having the floor for the presentation of petitions, said: "I hold in my hand the petition of Benjamin Emerson and forty-five other citizens of Haverhill, Massachusetts, praying Congress to adopt immediate measures for the peaceful dissolution of the union of these States." Hardly had these words fallen from his lips when several slaveholding members, many of them then known and since proved to be disunionists, clamorously demanded leave to speak. But Mr. Adams, having the floor,



moved the reference of this petition to a select committee of nine members, with instructions to report an answer to the petitioners showing the reason why their prayer could not be granted. From all parts of the House came vehement and passionate demands for the floor, which was given to Mr. Hopkins of Virginia. He inquired of the Speaker if it would be in order to burn the petition in the presence of the House. Mr. Wise inquired if it would be in order to present a resolution censuring Mr. Adams; and such a resolution was introduced by Mr. Gilmer of the same State. Mr. Adams expressed the hope that the resolution would be received and debated, and that he might have an opportunity of defending his action.

The House adjourned, and notice was given that the members from the slave States would hold a meeting that evening for consultation. The meeting was held; and Thomas F. Marshall, a Whig from Kentucky, a brilliant speaker, of whose future career high expectations were entertained, was selected as the leader in the work of censure. While this conclave was preparing for the trial, a few members of the House assembled at the room of Mr. Giddings. Joshua Leavitt and Theodore D. Weld, among the ablest and most effective advocates of emancipation, were present, and were commissioned to call on Mr. Adams and tender him any assistance in the power of the persons then assembled to render. The venerable statesman expressed his most profound gratitude for this offer of friendly aid, and requested them to examine certain points in the authorities, a list of which he gave them. These gentlemen performed their task with alacrity and success, so that, on the assembling of the House next day, the desk of Mr. Adams was covered with volumes ready for immediate use.

Immediately after the reading of the journal, Mr. Marshall submitted three resolutions, as an amendment to that offered by Mr. Gilmer, in which it was set forth that the act of Mr. Adams might be held to merit expulsion; that the House deemed it an act of mercy and grace when they only inflicted upon him the severest censure for conduct so unworthy of his past relations to the State and his present position, and that

this they did for the maintenance of their purity and dignity ; and for the rest they turned him over to his own conscience and the indignation of all American citizens. Mr. Marshall evidently entered upon his work with heart and hope. He was an orator of rare power, though ambitious, egotistical, and of unbalanced judgment. Like too many men of rare gifts and high promise, he became the victim of intemperance ; and though, through the persuasive influence of the late Governor Briggs of Massachusetts, then a member, he reformed for a few months, he soon relapsed, and became an utter wreck. When he rose to speak on this occasion the galleries were thronged and the House filled with privileged persons. He spoke with so much eloquence and force that the enemies of Mr. Adams were very much elated and his friends not a little depressed.

When Mr. Marshall closed, the venerable statesman, rising, asked the Clerk to read the first paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, which declares when any form of government becomes destructive of the ends of establishment it is the right or the duty of the people to alter or abolish it, and reorganize its powers in such form as to them shall appear best to secure their interest and happiness. He then proceeded to maintain that the people had a right to reform abuses of the government, and bring it back to the performance of duties for which it was instituted ; that they had a right to ask Congress to do what they thought they ought to do, and it was the duty of Congress to state the reason why their prayer should not be granted. He charged that the people were oppressed by the denial of the right of petition, and of the freedom of debate, and that the South was endeavoring to destroy the right of *habeas corpus* and trial by jury, and to force slavery on the free States. He said emphatically, that, if the rights of the people were to be taken away by a coalition between Southern slaveholders and Northern Democrats, it was time for the people to arise and assert their rights. He asked for more time in which to prepare his defence ; and Mr. Horace Everett of Vermont moved a postponement of two weeks for that purpose.

Henry A. Wise then took the floor and spoke at great length,

charging Mr. Adams with conspiring with British Abolitionists to destroy the Union. He bitterly denounced Mr. Adams for saying that, in case of insurrection, the President might, if necessary to restore peace, emancipate the slaves. Having supported Mr. Tyler against the great body of Whigs in and out of Congress, he called upon the Democratic party to put down Abolitionism; for, if slavery were destroyed, he said, the great democratic principle of equality among men would become obsolete.

Mr. Adams replied to the bitter and violent assault of Mr. Wise with terrible severity. Alluding to his connection, as a second to Mr. Graves, with the duel in which Mr. Cilley was killed, he said that Mr. Wise had come into that hall a few years since "with his hands dripping with human gore, a blotch of human blood upon his face." Turning from Mr. Wise, Mr. Adams replied to the speech of Mr. Marshall, who had charged him with high treason. He thanked God that the Constitution of the United States had defined treason, and that it was not left for the "puny mind" of the gentleman of Kentucky to define that crime. He said that, were he Mr. Marshall's father, he would "advise him to return to Kentucky, and take his place in some law school, and commence the study of that profession he has disgraced." Mr. Adams proceeded to arraign the slaveholders, and to open an aggressive war upon the champions of slavery.

The resolution of censure was opposed by Mr. Underwood, a Whig member from Kentucky, who announced his opposition to all rules denominated "gag laws." Mr. Arnold, a Whig member from Tennessee, sustained Mr. Adams and denounced the twenty-first rule as a violation of the Constitution. Mr. Botts bravely lent his support, and referred to the fact that, a few years before, Mr. Rhett of South Carolina had drawn up resolutions for the dissolution of the Union, and had sought for an opportunity to present them. Mr. Gilmer offered to withdraw his resolution of censure if Mr. Adams would withdraw the petition. But this he sternly refused to do, declaring that he would not violate his sense of duty to obtain the favor or forbearance of the House.



Mr. Marshall again addressed the House, and then called for the previous question. But Mr. Adams demanded the floor, obtained it, and proceeded in his defence. Taking the aggressive, he assailed with great effect slavery and the Slave Power. Mr. Saunders of North Carolina called him to order, but the Speaker allowed him to proceed. From this decision Mr. Saunders appealed, but the House sustained the Speaker.

The next day Mr. Merriwether of Georgia stated that ten or twelve days had been taken up in the trial, and he wished to know how much more time Mr. Adams expected to occupy in his defence. Mr. Adams replied that he was not responsible for the time occupied; that when Warren Hastings was tried Burke occupied some months in a single speech; and he thought he could "close in ninety days." On motion of Mr. Botts the resolutions of censure were laid upon the table by a majority of thirteen. The friends of Mr. Adams were proud of the gallant fight their champion had made, and greatly elated at the signal victory which crowned it. On the other hand, his enemies, baffled, defeated, and humiliated, felt that for once, at least, slavery had lost and freedom had won.

The Whigs had a majority of nearly forty in that Congress. Though the Northern Whigs and a few of their Southern associates were against the twenty-first rule, that arbitrary and obnoxious measure remained during that Congress without modification.

In the XXVIIIth Congress the Democrats had a large majority. Early in the session Mr. Adams moved the appointment of a committee to report rules for the government of the House. This committee, of which he was chairman, made a report omitting the twenty-first rule. This report was discussed for several weeks, in the morning hour. In this debate Mr. Adams was severely, if not wantonly, assailed by the representatives of the Slave Power. During this long discussion Mr. Dillett of Alabama, in assailing Mr. Adams, quoted these words from a speech delivered by him to the colored people of Pittsburg: "We know that the day of your redemption must come. The time and manner of its coming we know not. It may come in peace, or it may come in blood ;

but whether in peace or in blood, let it come." Mr. Adams said with emphasis: "I say now, let it come." To this remark of Mr. Adams Mr. Dillett replied: "Yes, the gentleman now says let it come, though it costs the blood of thousands of white men." Mr. Adams quickly responded: "Though it costs the blood of *millions* of white men, let it come!" Of course the slaveholders were terribly shocked at these words of the venerable statesman.

During the debate several Northern Democrats avowed their opposition to this continued suppression of the right of petition. John P. Hale of New Hampshire, and Hannibal Hamlin of Maine, members of the Democratic party, then first came into Congress, and both of them were in favor of abrogating that arbitrary, unconstitutional, and indefensible rule. Mr. Hamlin took an early occasion to express his opposition to it, and to advocate the right of the people to petition for the redress of grievances. When he closed, Mr. Adams, who had listened to him with marked attention, crossed the hall and offered him his hand, with the remark: "Light breaketh in the East."

But all efforts were unavailing. The report was laid upon the table by a small majority, and the obnoxious rule was retained. Early, however, in the second session, Mr. Adams again moved to rescind it, and now with more cheering prospects of success. For ten years, amid calumny and abuse, he had struggled to secure for the people the simple right of petition, but always against an unyielding majority. The time had come when that majority was broken, and the rule, by twenty-eight majority, was stricken out. Fourteen members only from the free States, a small remnant of the host Mr. Adams was wont to characterize as "the Swiss guards of slavery fighting for pay," rallied in the last struggle to keep the "gag" alike upon the lips of the people and of their representatives. It was, however, for many years, practically a barren victory, for not only did the petitioners fail in securing a favorable response to their prayers, but with slaveholding cunning the Speakers of the House so constituted the committee to which such petitions were referred that they were never reported upon, and

were sent at the close of the session "to the tomb of the Capulets."

That Mr. Adams never identified himself with the antislavery men and associations of his day, and that he distrusted both the immediate objects of their effort and their modes of procedure to obtain those objects, are well known. As late as 1840 he not only declared that he had never given the slightest encouragement to petitions for the immediate and uncompensated abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia or elsewhere, but indulged in the somewhat caustic remark, that, if the total abolition of slavery was the purpose of Divine Providence, other agents and other means would be employed than either the American Colonization or Abolition Societies; "or if these societies, or either of them, are to be made instrumental in the accomplishment of the great work, they must entirely change their modes of operation, and come down from the empyrean of their fancy to the vapory atmosphere of this nether world."

In his letter of acceptance of the nomination for Congress, in the autumn of 1838, he said: "The abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, or in the Territory of Florida; the prohibition of the internal piracy between the States; the refusal to admit another contaminated State into the Union, — are all partial, ineffective plasters for the great elemental evil.

" "They will but skin and film the ulcerous part,  
While rank corruption mining all within  
Infects unseen.' "

In the April following, in letters addressed to the citizens of the United States whose petitions he had been presenting to Congress, after informing the petitioners that their petitions "had received very little notice from the House," he did not hesitate to inform them that he could not vote for the immediate abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia or in the Territory of Florida, nor for a refusal to admit that Territory as a slaveholding State into the Union. His main reasons were that it was impracticable and would be improper. That it was impracticable he argued, "because public opinion throughout the Union is against it." It would be improper mainly "because



it would operate exclusively upon the people of the District in compliance with the petitions of those not affected themselves by the law"; and this would be "contrary to the first principles of our institutions," especially that principle of the Declaration "that derives all the just power of government from the consent of the governed."

But while Mr. Adams failed to accept and approve the distinctive measures of the Abolitionists, there were none who seemed to comprehend more fully than he the magnitude, guilt, inveteracy, and danger to the land of American slavery, and its pervasive and perilous ascendancy in every department of the nation's social and civil life. In his letter to his constituents, he had said that "the Union will fall before slavery, or it will fall before the Union." In a letter to the Rhode Island Antislavery Society, written in December, 1838, he used this unequivocal language: "No one attentive to the progress of our history as an independent nation can fail to see that in the silent lapse of time slavery has been winding its cobweb-thread around all our free institutions. This was not the covenant to which we pledged our faith in the Declaration of Independence." The fathers believed and meant slavery to be temporary; emancipation was the end in view, only the "time and mode" were uncertain. "George Washington was an Abolitionist; so was Thomas Jefferson. But were they alive, and should dare to show their faces and to utter the self-evident truth of the Declaration within the State of South Carolina, they would be hanged."

"It is not," he said, "an occasional ebullition of popular passion and feeling which marks the contrast between the sentiments of the fathers and the slaveholding doctrines" of their posterity. "It is the perversion of intellect, the depravation of moral feeling, the degradation of man to the standard of the brute, which marks the American school of servile philosophy." But he had faith in the power of truth and of well-directed effort; nor was he hopeless of good results therefrom. In this Rhode Island letter he says: "The fire of liberty burns yet, though with a flickering flame, in New England. It will yet kindle and consume to ashes the dastardly sophisms with which

slavery would pollute our souls. I may not live to see the day, but I wait for it only to say with Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.' " In a letter to Edmund Quincy, written a few months before, declining an invitation to attend an antislavery meeting on account of age and infirmities, he wrote: "I rejoice that the cause of human freedom is falling into younger and more vigorous hands. That in three-score years from the day of the Declaration of Independence its self-evident truths should be yet struggling for existence against the degeneracy of an age pampered with prosperity and languishing into servitude, is a melancholy truth from which I should in vain attempt to shut my eyes. But the summons has gone forth; the youthful champions of the rights of human nature have buckled and are buckling on their armor, and the scourging overseer, the lynching lawyer, and the servile sophist, and the faithless scribe, and the priestly parasite will vanish before them like Satan touched by the spear of Ithuriel. I live in the faith and hope of the progressive advancement of Christian liberty, and expect to abide by the same in death."

Mr. Adams's public disavowal of all sympathy with the immediate purposes and policy of the Abolitionists, and the somewhat cavalier manner in which he characterized their associations and modes of effort, evoked earnest responses. In February, 1839, Mr. Garrison addressed to him a letter, in which he gave utterance to the feelings and sentiments which his general course and some recent speeches in Congress had produced in many minds. He first quoted some striking expressions from these speeches, setting forth his strong abhorrence of slavery. Mr. Adams had said: "The moral principle which had interdicted the African slave-trade pronounced at once the sentence of condemnation upon slavery." He had also said: "Unyielding opposition against slavery is interwoven with every pulsation of my heart. Resistance against it, feeble and inefficient as the last accents of a failing voice may be, shall still be heard while the power of utterance shall remain, and shall never cease till the pitcher shall be broken at the fountain, the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it."

In view of these and similar utterances Mr. Garrison wrote : " There are two parties in this country who are equally puzzled to reconcile your abhorrence of slavery with your determination not to vote for its abolition in the District of Columbia,—the slaveholders of the South and the Abolitionists of the North. In your theory of human rights the latter understand that you agree in principle with those who by the help of God are resolved upon subverting a foul and bloody system. In your unwillingness to carry that theory into practice, the former perceive that you are acting in concert with all that is despotic and inhuman in the land. You are claimed and rejected by both at the same moment." On one occasion Mr. Adams had used this expression : " I say it here openly, that the Abolitionists and Antislavery Societies may take in regard to me what course they please." To this Mr. Garrison replied : " If you had been as explicit in your declarations at the time your election was pending as you now are, a majority of your constituents would have cast their votes for some other candidate."

Mr. Birney, as late as 1843, expressed himself concerning Mr. Adams's course in language equally unequivocal. " His course," he said, " in my judgment has been eccentric, whimsical, inconsistent, and, taken as a whole, thus far is unworthy of a statesman of large views and a right temper in a great national conjuncture." " He has given the Abolitionists words, *words*, WORDS, and to their adversaries everything that is substantial."

A most elaborate and able reply to Mr. Adams's letters was made by William Goodell. His long connection with the anti-slavery reform, his large acquaintance with the subject, and his unquestioned ability, enabled him to present with clearness the views of the school he represented. He began by bestowing upon the services of Mr. Adams in the cause of the right of petition the most unstinted praise, declaring that he " could not fail to be written down as the people's champion of the people's right of petition." His first criticism was that Mr. Adams's letter breathed too much the air of despondency. He had said that if the South continued to maintain its



position it was impossible for the Union long to continue, and that he hung his "head in despondency at the prospect for the rights of man," as "if the grand crisis had arrived and liberty appeared to be breathing its last gasp." But, added Mr. Goodell, with a confidence that now seems surprising, considering the rough usage and the kind and extent of opposition the few antislavery men of that day were compelled to encounter, "I cannot, I dare not, I will not permit myself to yield to such feelings. No; I am an Abolitionist, and therefore I will not yet despair of the republic. . . . As an Abolitionist I cannot despair so long as there is a press left in the country unfettered, or while a tongue moves among our thirteen millions ungagged; or so long as there remains a scrip of unsoiled paper, or quill of an uncaged eagle by which an unbought and unmanacled hand can write ABOLITION and Freedom."

In defence of the doctrine that in immediate abolition lay the only hope of the nation, Mr. Goodell urged that there was no hope in the colonization scheme, of which Mr. Adams himself had said, "the search of the philosopher's stone and the casting of nativities by the course of the stars were rational and sensible amusements in the comparison." He urged also Mr. Adams's unavailing attempt to introduce a scheme of gradual emancipation into the House, and his admission that he "had no expectation that it would be received." As to the impracticability of abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia he said that it could only be said to be "unpractised, not impracticable." To Mr. Adams's expressed disinclination to make these opinions "articles of a religious creed," or to "exercise force or constraint for the liberation of a slave," he replied: "The thunders of Sinai you would have hushed. The weapons of the ballot-box in this warfare you would take from the hands of freemen. . . . Why should not the South be at peace with you? What Abolitionists in our ranks could not make peace on the same terms?"

Now that slavery is destroyed and the conflicting views of the different schools are among the dead issues of the past, comparatively small importance inheres in the detailed argu-

ments that were then urged in their support. But the main points of those differences and their discussions must ever be matters of special interest to those who would clearly comprehend the nature and progress of that struggle. These discrepancies of thought and feeling, often expressed with some degree of acerbity, were entertained by men of unquestioned ability, profound convictions, and inflexible integrity; by men who were alike hostile to slavery, impatient at its domination, and anxious for its overthrow. Why then did they exist among those whose names are so honorably associated with the conflict itself? Among the elements of any satisfactory answer stands pre-eminently the character of the question which confronted them. Its magnitude and immense difficulties they could not, as events have shown, fully comprehend. Therefore they could not clearly discern just what duty and true policy required. In the darkness of the hour and amid the perplexing difficulties of the situation they could not but grope their way, and it is little cause of wonder that they did not always strike the same path. With strong individuality and positiveness of character, their very earnestness, honesty, and anxiety to adopt the best methods of action very likely increased the danger of disagreement, and sometimes, no doubt, made them uncharitable toward each other. The question had so many bearings and involved so many issues that little short of Divine wisdom was sufficient to point out the path of a safe deliverance. These difficulties were greatly increased, too, by the general demoralization of the people and their indifference to any action. The "perversion of intellect and depravation of moral feeling" of which Mr. Adams complained always exerted their paralyzing influences on all modes of action, however wisely devised or discreetly pursued.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### COASTWISE SLAVE-TRADE. — DEMANDS UPON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. — CENSURE OF MR. GIDDINGS.

Coastwise Slave-trade. — American Vessels wrecked. — Slaves liberated by British Authorities. — Representations of the Case by the American Minister to England. — The Action of the British Government denounced. — Resolutions of Mr. Calhoun. — Debate on the Resolutions. — Remarks of Mr. Porter. — Passage of the Resolutions. — Exasperation of the Slaveholders. — The “Creole” seized by the Slaves and carried into Nassau. — Refusal to surrender the Slaves. — Excitement in the South. — Excited Debate in the Senate. — Mr. Calhoun’s Resolutions relating to the “Creole.” — Mr. Webster’s Despatch to Mr. Everett. — Approved by Mr. Calhoun. — Action of England. — Resolution of Mr. Giddings. — Exciting Scene. — Resolution of Censure by Mr. Botts. — Resolution adopted by Mr. Weller. — Resolution of Censure passed. — Mr. Giddings sustained by his Constituents.

THE coastwise slave-trade, legalized by the same act that prohibited the African slave-trade, increased with the increasing domestic slave-traffic. In the year 1830 the schooner “Comet” sailed from Alexandria with a cargo of slaves destined for the New Orleans market. She was wrecked on the False Keys of the Bahama Islands, and her passengers, slaves included, were carried by the wreckers to Nassau, where the freedom of the slaves was fully recognized. Four years afterward the “Encomium” sailed from Charleston, with a number of slaves on board, destined for Louisiana. She was stranded near the same place, and carried in the same manner into Nassau, where her slaves became free. In 1835 the “Enterprise” sailed from the District of Columbia with a cargo of slaves for Charleston, and was forced to put into Port Hamilton, Bermuda, through stress of weather; and her slaves too became free under the protection of British power.



Of course, the owners of these chattels, thus by accident transformed into men, protested against the loss and demanded redress of their government. Negotiations were commenced by President Jackson, and the American minister was instructed to press their claims upon the British government. Andrew Stevenson of Virginia was at that time the minister of the United States at the Court of St. James. Bred and educated among those who deemed the support of slavery to be one of the highest duties of the government, he entered upon this duty with zeal and alacrity. Claiming that under the Constitution of the United States slaves were property, that there was no distinction between property in persons and property in things, he asserted that the government of the United States had "in the most solemn manner determined that slaves killed in the service of the United States, even in time of war, were to be regarded as property, and paid for as such." This statement was untrue in fact, and Mr. Stevenson could not but have known it to be so. He had been Speaker of the House of Representatives in 1828, when the case of *D'Autrieve* was debated at great length, and with learning and ability. In that case the doctrine that slaves were property was denied in the most emphatic manner.

Mr. Van Buren continued to press these claims upon the British government; and it paid, during his administration, for the slaves of the "*Comet*" and the "*Encomium*," stranded prior to West Indian emancipation. But England refused to pay for the slaves on board the "*Enterprise*," which put into Port Hamilton in 1835, after the abolition of slavery in her colonies. This action was based upon the ideas that by the law of nations the ship on entering Port Hamilton became subject to British laws; that there was no law of slavery there; and that the authorities could not recognize the right of the slave-dealers to hold their slaves as property when they demanded their liberty.

Of course this decision, involving a question of such practical importance to the slaveholders of the United States, was wholly unsatisfactory to their representatives. Mr. Calhoun brought the matter before the Senate in resolutions which

asserted that a ship on the high seas in time of peace, engaged in a lawful voyage, is, according to the law of nations, under the exclusive jurisdiction of the State to which her flag belongs; that, if such ship should be forced by stress of weather or other unavoidable cause into the port of a friendly power, she and her cargo, and the persons on board, with their property, and all the rights belonging to their personal relations as established by the laws of the State to which they belong, would be placed under the protection which the laws of the nation extend to the unfortunate under such circumstances; that the brig "Enterprise" came within those provisions, and that the detention of the negroes on board by the local authorities of the island was an act in violation of the laws of nations and highly unjust to the citizens to whom they belonged. In his argument in support of these resolutions he admitted that if the slaves had been taken voluntarily into the British port the action of that government would have been correct; but he maintained that the law of nations interposed in case of this enforced entrance into England's jurisdiction. He said it was not a mere abstract question as to the possession of the slaves; that the island of Bermuda was but a short distance from the United States; that the channel between the coast of Florida and the Bahamas is two hundred miles long and not more than fifty wide; that through that long, narrow, and difficult channel the immense trade, which at no distant period would constitute more than half of the trade of the Union, would pass. "The principle set up by the British government," he said, "if carried out to its fullest extent, would do much to close this all-important channel, by rendering it too hazardous for use. She has only to give an indefinite extent to the principle applied to the case of the 'Enterprise' and the work would be done; and why has she not as good a right to apply this principle to a cargo of sugar and cotton as to the slaves that produce it?"

Mr. Calhoun was sustained in this point by Mr. King of Alabama and by Mr. Grundy of Tennessee. The resolutions were then referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, and promptly reported back by Mr. Buchanan, with slight

modifications. They were advocated by Mr. Clay and Mr. Benton, and opposed only by Mr. Porter, a new senator from Michigan. Seeing that eminent senators around him interposed no objection to the passage of the resolutions, he, obeying the dictates of his own judgment and conscience, says Mr. Giddings, "heroically met the overwhelming influence arrayed against him, and showed the most cogent reasons for rejecting the resolutions, by exhibiting the absurdity of the attempt to change the law of nations by senatorial resolution, and the yet greater absurdity of the attempt to induce the British government to acknowledge the laws of slavery and the slave-trade to exist and be enforced within her ports." He closed by moving to lay the resolutions on the table, and demanded the yeas and nays on his motion; and, on the roll being called, thirty-three senators voted for them, and he alone voted against them. Several senators — among them Webster and Davis of Massachusetts, Wright of New York, Southard of New Jersey, and Smith of Indiana — declined to vote. The resolutions were then passed, thirty-three senators voting for them and none against them. By the passage of these resolutions the Senate of the United States, under the lead of Southern senators, sought to compel the British government to acknowledge the laws and forcibly protect the interest of the slaveholding States. And England, who had just emancipated her own bondmen, was required at this bidding to ignore the claims of justice and humanity in the persons of these slaves, and perform the ignoble service of recapturing those whom the more merciful elements had set free.

The "Hermosa," another slave-ship that sailed from Richmond in 1840 for New Orleans, was wrecked on a British island and taken into Nassau, where the slaves claimed their right to liberty and obtained it. A New Orleans insurance company that had taken risks on the cargo was called on for indemnification for the slaves. A petition was presented to Congress by Mr. Barrow of Louisiana, praying that measures might be taken to obtain from the British government compensation for the slaves thus escaping. On the presentation of this petition he declared that the case might present a question of peace or



war with England, and that the people of the Southern States were the last to submit to the principles of international law as construed by the authorities of that country.

In four instances the slaves on board American ships, engaged in the coastwise slave-trade, had found freedom in the British islands. The slaveholders were much exasperated; and, although they demanded redress with great vehemence and pertinacity, their feelings were not soothed by success. Another case arose in the autumn of 1841, under circumstances calculated to intensify excitement and imbitter still more their feelings. The brig "Creole," of Richmond, with one hundred and thirty-five slaves on board, sailed for New Orleans in the latter part of October. On the evening of the 7th of November, near the Bahama Islands, nineteen of the slaves, under the lead of Madison Washington, — who is said to have escaped to Canada, and to have returned South with the resolution to obtain his wife or perish in the attempt, — rose and obtained possession of the brig, and directed her to be taken into Nassau, where she arrived two days afterward. In the struggle John R. Howell, a slave-vender, was killed, and Captain Gifford, the first mate, and ten of the crew, were wounded. These self-emancipated freemen had it in their power to take the lives of one and all the white persons on board. But they rose superior to revenge and retaliation. Even the wounded captain and crew testified that "the mutineers said that all they had done was for their own freedom." They proved their object was not to take life, but to secure liberty. The British authorities placed a guard on board the vessel and investigated the circumstances of the case. "The nineteen" of the slaves were held for the purpose of obtaining instructions from the home government, and the others were allowed to go free. The officers of the brig demanded that the mutineers should be left on board, to be taken into some port of the United States and tried for mutiny and murder; but the authorities positively refused to give them up. "This was tantamount," says Colonel Benton, in his "Thirty Years' View," "to an acquittal, and even to a justification of all they had done; as, according to British decisions, a slave has a right to kill his master to obtain his freedom."

This affair greatly inflamed the Southern mind. Southern leaders stormed and Southern presses blustered. They declared, if Great Britain would not listen to the voice of reason, resort must be had to some other mode of bringing her to her senses and to a just perception of the law of nations ; that the government of the United States would not tamely acquiesce in such gross and oft-repeated invasions of its national rights, and that no man of any party in the South would have patience with " executive, secretary, or minister who should trifle with their impatience or compromise their rights."

On the 23d of December Mr. Barrow of Louisiana presented a memorial from an insurance company in New Orleans which had taken the risk on these slaves. Mr. Barrow said that Congress should act, and set forth to the country and the world the principles of international law which were recognized by her and which would be maintained at all hazards. He wished to trust this matter to other agents than the President and the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the British Queen. " The property of the South," he said, " is unsafe ; and, if it is to be subjected to the plundering propensities of British officials, they might be compelled to fit out armaments and destroy Nassau and other nests of incendiaries and plunderers adjacent to our coast."

Mr. Calhoun regarded the case of the " Creole " as one of the most " atrocious and insulting outrages " ever perpetrated by one civilized government upon another. He proceeded to denounce it as " a case of naked piracy," and called upon the government to demand " the pirates " for punishment ; and he looked to every man who had " an American heart to raise his voice and his arm against such tyrannical insolence and oppression." His colleague, Mr. Preston, said that the law of nations was " clear and imperative " on the question in dispute between the two governments, and he thought Great Britain, whose government was in the hands of an enlightened and liberal-minded statesman, would hardly come in conflict with " this government on such an untenable position."

Mr. King of Alabama was exceedingly belligerent. He thought these lawless attempts of Great Britain, that grasping

at universal dominion, would "render war inevitable," unless she retraced her steps. The memorial was then referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. On the 11th of February another debate arose on a resolution, introduced by Mr. Calhoun, requesting the President to communicate to the Senate any authenticated accounts he had received of murder on the brig "Creole," and the wounding of the captain and mate, by slaves on board, and the occurrences which took place at Nassau after the arrival of the vessel at that port; what steps had been taken by the Executive for the punishment of the guilty, the redress of the wrong done to Southern citizens, and the insult offered to the American flag. Mr. Clay avowed that he had read the narration of the transaction with "the most thrilling and appalling feelings"; that the "Creole" had been thrown on the Bahama Islands by "an act of mutiny and murder"; and, if the British authorities sanctioned "the enormity," Americans would be virtually denied the benefits of the coastwise trade around their own country, for their vessels could not proceed in safety from one port to another with slaves on board.

Mr. King seized the occasion to denounce Northern Abolitionists as a set of miserable fanatics and contemptible wretches, who were attempting by every means in their power to disturb the harmony of the government and violate the rights of the South. He said it was settled at an early period of the government that the citizens of the South were to have secured to them "the right to hold slaves against the world," and he thought "the days of this government were numbered if any respectable part of the United States were disposed to side with Great Britain on the question at issue; for the South had rights, and they would maintain them at all hazard, whether invaded at home or violated abroad."

The resolution was adopted, and the President promptly responded through Mr. Webster, Secretary of State, showing that the facts in the case had been received by the government, and that the Secretary had received instructions to prepare a despatch to Mr. Everett, the minister at the Court of St. James, and that it would be done without delay. On moving the refer-



ence of the message to the Committee on Foreign Relations, Mr. Calhoun expressed his regret that it was not satisfactory. He had supposed that prompt measures would have been adopted, and that a vessel would have been despatched to demand, through our minister at London, that the criminals should be given up for trial. But he had been mistaken. He said that the outrage of the British government could not have been greater, nor more clearly contrary to the law of nations, if, instead of taking the persons engaged in "mutiny and murder" from the "Creole," they had entered the territory of the United States and taken them "from our jails."

Mr. Webster's despatch to Mr. Everett was speedily prepared, at once called for, communicated to the Senate, and published. It gave great satisfaction to the slaveholders. As soon as it was read in the Senate, Mr. Calhoun rose and said: "The letter which has been read was drawn up with great ability, and covered the ground which has been assumed by all parties in the Senate. I hope that it will have a beneficial effect upon the United States; but upon Great Britain, coming from the quarter it does, this document will do more good than in coming from any other quarter."

The British government was assured by Mr. Webster that the case was one "calling loudly for redress"; that the "Creole" was passing from one port to another of the United States, on a voyage "perfectly lawful," with persons bound to service belonging to American citizens, and recognized as property by the Constitution of the United States and in those States in which slavery existed; that the slaves rose, murdered one man, and that the "mutineers and murderers" took the vessel into a British port. He declared that it was the plain and obvious duty of the authorities of Nassau to assist in restoring to the master and crew their vessel, and in enabling them to resume their voyage and to take with them the mutineers and murderers to their own country to answer for their crimes. This extraordinary position and claim were laid before the British government; but all efforts to secure compensation for the slaves, or the surrender of the men who had asserted and maintained their own liberty, were unavailing. England declined

to act the ignoble part of a slave-catcher for the slave-traffickers of the United States.

Mr. Giddings, then a member of the House of Representatives, was so impressed with the positions of the President and Senate, that he deemed it to be a duty he owed to his country to combat them. He drew up a series of resolutions, setting forth that prior to the adoption of the Constitution each State exercised full and perfect jurisdiction over slaves in its own territory; that by the adoption of the Constitution no part of that jurisdiction was delegated to the Federal government; that by the Constitution each State surrendered to the Federal government complete jurisdiction over commerce and navigation; that slavery, being an abridgment of the natural rights of men, could exist only by positive municipal law; that, when a ship belonging to a citizen of any State left the waters of the United States and entered upon the high seas, the persons on board became amenable to the laws of the United States; that when the brig "Creole" left Virginia the slavery laws of that State ceased to have jurisdiction over the persons on board; that in resuming their natural rights they violated no law of the United States, nor incurred any legal penalties; that all attempts to gain possession of or to re-enslave these persons were unauthorized by the Constitution and laws of the United States; that all attempts to exert the influence of the nation in favor of the coastwise slave-trade was subversive of the rights of the people of the free States, unauthorized by the Constitution, and prejudicial to the national character.

These resolutions were submitted to the consideration of Mr. Adams. He avowed his readiness to support them, excepting the one denying the right of the Federal government to abolish slavery in the States. He held that the national government, in case of insurrection or war, might, under the war-power, abolish slavery, and, with statesmanlike sagacity and a wise forecast of possible contingencies, which subsequent events proved to be near at hand, he did not wish to give a vote that would be quoted by the friends of slavery as a denial of that power; "but," he added, "I will cheerfully

sustain all but that which denies this right to the Federal government."

When, on the 21st of March, the State of Ohio was called, Mr. Giddings introduced these resolutions, and gave notice that he would call them up for consideration the next day. The reading of the resolutions attracted profound attention, and created much excitement. Mr. Ward, a Democratic member from New York, proposed to bring the House to an immediate vote by demanding the previous question. Remarking that the resolutions were too important to be adopted or rejected without consideration, Mr. Everett of Vermont moved to lay them on the table; but his motion was defeated by a large majority. Mr. Holmes of South Carolina, rising under great excitement, remarked: "There are certain topics, like certain places, of which it might be said, 'Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.' " The House, by the large vote of one hundred and twenty-two to sixty-one, sustained the previous question. Mr. Everett asked to be excused from voting. As the subject was very important, and would probably come before the Committee on Foreign Relations, of which he was a member, he did not desire to express an opinion until he had examined it. He was a gentleman of high character, ripe age, large experience, and of much influence with his party and in the House. Usually moderate and cautious, on this occasion he seemed to be influenced by the excitement around him, and expressed his "utter abhorrence of the firebrand course of the gentleman from Ohio." Mr. Fessenden, then a young and rising member of the House from Maine, thought the resolutions were too important to be voted upon without greater deliberation. Mr. Cushing, then understood to be a special friend of the President and an exponent of his views, after reading the resolutions at the clerk's table, said: "They appear to be a British argument on a great question between the British and American governments, and constitute an approximation to treason on which I intend to vote 'No.' "

At the request of Mr. Fessenden, Mr. Giddings withdrew the resolutions, remarking that they would be published, and gentlemen would have time to examine them with care, and he



would present them the next day, when the resolutions would be in order. Mr. Botts then rose and, remarking that the withdrawal of the resolutions did not excuse their presentation, submitted a preamble and resolution; the first setting forth that Mr. Giddings had presented a series of resolutions touching the most important interest connected with a large portion of the Union, then a subject of negotiation with the government of Great Britain of the most delicate nature, the result of which "might involve those nations and perhaps the civilized world in war," in which mutiny and murder were justified and approved in terms shocking all sense of law, order, and humanity; and the latter declaring that this House holds that "the conduct of the said member is altogether inconsistent and unwarranted, and deserving the severest condemnation of the people of this country, and of this body in particular." Objection being made to the consideration of the resolution, Mr. Botts moved a suspension of the rules, but was not sustained by a vote of the House.

As Ohio was still under the call for resolutions, under the rule, Mr. Weller, a Democratic member from that State, adopted Mr. Botts's resolution as his own, offered it, and called for the previous question. Several members questioned the propriety of ordering the previous question; but Mr. Weller, who was a Democrat of the most intense proslavery type, persisted in demanding it. The Speaker, Mr. White of Kentucky, decided that on a question of privilege the previous question could not cut off a member from his defence. Mr. Fillmore appealed from the decision; and the House overruled the Speaker by a large majority, and adjourned.

Thus arraigned for a conscientious discharge of public duty, Mr. Giddings spent the entire night and the forenoon of the next day in preparing for his defence. Calling at the residence of Mr. Adams, for the purpose of consultation, he found, he says, "the aged patriot laboring under great distress." He expressed to Mr. Giddings the fear that no defence would be permitted; that the question would be taken without debate, and the vote of censure passed. Mr. Giddings anticipated the vote of censure; but he suggested that the reflections of the

night would convince members of "the impropriety of condemning a man unheard." To this suggestion Mr. Adams made the discriminating and suggestive reply: "You are not as familiar with the slaveholding character as I am. Slaveholders act from impulse, not from reflection. They act together from interest, and have no dread of the displeasure of their constituents when they act for slavery."

On the assembling of the House, the Speaker remarked that the first business was on seconding the demand for the previous question. Mr. Weller said he would withdraw his demand for the previous question if Mr. Giddings would proceed with his defence, with the understanding that it should be called when he closed. But, Mr. Giddings refusing to make any terms to secure what he deemed to be his constitutional right, the previous question was ordered by seven majority. Mr. Weller then moved the suspension of the rules, to allow Mr. Giddings to make his defence; but the Speaker pronounced the motion out of order. To the suggestion of Mr. Adams that while the previous question cut off other members it ought not to apply to the member accused, the Speaker replied that the House had decided that the previous question applied to cases of privilege, and the privilege of one was the privilege of all.

The motion was made to hear Mr. Giddings by unanimous consent, and it was announced that such consent had been given. Mr. Giddings then said: "Mr. Speaker, I stand before the House in a peculiar position." Mr. Cooper of Georgia then objected to his proceeding, and he took his seat. Members gathered around Mr. Cooper, and persuaded him to withdraw his objection; but it was renewed by Mr. Calhoun of Massachusetts, who declared that he would not see a member of the House speak under such circumstances.

Mr. Giddings states that when he rose to speak he had intended to say: "It is proposed to pass a vote of censure upon me, substantially for the reason that I differ in opinion from a majority of the members. The vote is about to be taken without giving me an opportunity to be heard. It were idle for me to say I am ignorant of the disposition of a major-

ity of the members to pass a vote of censure. I have been violently assailed in a personal manner, but have had no opportunity of being heard in reply. Nor do I ask for any favor at the hands of gentlemen; but, in the name of an insulted constituency, in behalf of one of the States of this Union, in behalf of the people of these States and of our Federal Constitution, I demand a hearing in the ordinary mode of proceeding. I accept no other privilege. I will receive no other courtesy."

The House, by a vote of one hundred and twenty-five to sixty-nine, adopted the vote of censure. Mr. Giddings then rose and, taking formal leave of the Speaker and officers of the House, retired from the hall. As he reached the front door he met Mr. Clay and Mr. Crittenden. Mr. Giddings states that "as Mr. Clay extended to me his hand he thanked me for the firmness with which I had met the outrage perpetrated upon me, and declared that no man would ever doubt my perfect right to state my own views, particularly while the Executive and the Senate were expressing theirs." Mr. Giddings immediately resigned, returned to Ohio, issued an address to the people of his district, was re-elected by a largely increased majority, and in five weeks took his seat in the House, "clothed with instructions from the people of his district to re-present his resolutions, and maintain to the extent of his power the doctrine which they asserted." He received a warm greeting from the friends of the freedom of debate, who had bravely stood by him in his time of trial.

The action of the House of Representatives, thus signally rebuked by Mr. Giddings's constituents, was also condemned by public meetings, whose proceedings were presented to Congress. Even some Democratic papers, among them the New York "Evening Post," asserted the right of Mr. Giddings to present his resolutions. And William C. Bryant, its accomplished editor, declared that if he was a resident of Mr. Giddings's district he would use every honorable means to secure his re-election. This action of the people produced most marked effects upon Congress. The majority who censured Mr. Giddings, fearing if the resolutions were again intro-



duced they would be compelled to vote upon the principles embodied in them, voted, during the remainder of the session, when by the rules resolutions might be presented, to proceed to other business. Finding he could not present the resolutions, he reasserted and vindicated the principles embodied in them in an able and effective speech, which was listened to without interruption. Indeed, notwithstanding all their bluster and arrogant pretension, there seemed from that time a marked falling-off in their zeal, and a manifest disposition to desist from claims they had just declared their purpose to press even to and beyond the very verge of war. And this, notwithstanding the significant fact that the British ministry had not only refused the indemnity so clamorously demanded, but declined to deliver up Madison Washington and his compeers of the "Creole's" brave "nineteen," stigmatized by members of Congress as "murderers and mutineers." When Lord Ashburton was charged with the mission of settling all questions of difference between the two nations, the British government especially instructed him to hold no correspondence on points pertaining to this controversy.

This sudden change of tactics of Southern members not only appears in marked contrast with their previous violent demonstrations, but provokes no very flattering estimate of the course of those Northern senators who had not a single vote to cast against the resolutions of Mr. Calhoun, which defiantly demanded what even the South itself found it convenient to forget. Indeed, that absence of a single negative, that unbroken silence, spoke louder than words. Trumpet-tongued it proclaimed the vassalage of the nation to the Slave Power, and the ignoble and cruel bondage under which the parties and public men of those days were held. It revealed the humiliating fact that they were obliged to smother their convictions and ignore the claims of truth, and were compelled to take the weightiest questions of government and those of national importance from the high court of reason and conscience into the secret conclave of party cabals, inspired by the spirit of slavery and under the discipline of the plantation. If the time ever comes when "things" shall be

"what they seem," and conscience and candor shall take the place of mere policy and pretension, it will be regarded as among the marvels of history that men acting from such motives in their public capacity should ever exhibit anything honorable and hearty in their personal and social relations, or that a representation acquiescing and participating in such an administration of public affairs could be anything but demoralized and debauched in the *personnel* of which it was composed.

Mr. Giddings had been appointed, by the Speaker, chairman of the Committee on Claims, a position he held at the time of his resignation, when another was appointed for the remainder of the session. At the beginning of the next session, an unavailing effort was made by Southern members to induce the Speaker not to reappoint Mr. Giddings to this important post. Mr. White, a personal friend of Mr. Clay, and among the most liberal of Southern statesmen, had pronounced the vote of censure an outrage, and without hesitation made Mr. Giddings chairman again of the committee. Consisting of nine members, it was composed of four Northern and two Southern Whigs, one Southern and two Northern Democrats. The three Democrats and two Southern Whigs had given their votes for the censure, and they deemed it a humiliation to sit with him as chairman. They accordingly determined to revive an old rule of the House, which had practically become obsolete, authorizing the committees to choose their own chairmen. A member of the committee apprised Mr. Giddings of this purpose, and advised him to resign. Having, however, acted according to the dictates of his conscience, he chose to abide the result. Mr. Arnold, a slaveholding Whig of Tennessee, refusing to support a scheme which he styled an outrage on a member because he was opposed to slavery, the project fell through and Mr. Giddings was permitted to retain his position.

But Mr. Giddings's earnest and outspoken fidelity to principle and to the cause of human rights often involved him in conflicts and exposed him to personal dangers, which well illustrated at once the coarse brutality and domineering violence of the slave-masters and the rough road they were called to travel who dared to question their supremacy and oppose

their policy. A somewhat marked example occurred near the close of the session in 1845. For the purpose of exhibiting the rascality of slaveholding demands, and the guilty subserviency and complicity of the government in yielding to those demands, he referred to the treaty of Indian Spring, by which, after paying the slaveholders of Georgia the sum of \$109,000 for slaves who had escaped to Florida, it added the sum of \$141,000 as compensation demanded for "the offspring which the females would have borne to their masters had they remained in bondage." And, said Mr. Giddings, Congress actually paid that sum "for children who were never born, but who might have been if their parents had remained faithful slaves."

Mr. Giddings's characterization of these outrageous and indecent demands and of this utterly indefensible policy greatly nettled the Southern members. Mr. Black of Georgia, in a towering passion, poured forth a torrent of coarse invectives and insinuations. He charged that Mr. Giddings had been interested in the horses and wagon lost by Mr. Torrey in his attempt to aid escaping fugitives; that Torrey died in the penitentiary; that the member of Ohio ought to be there; and, if Congress could decide the question, that would be his doom. With low-minded impertinence, he advised him to return to his constituents to "inquire if he had a character," asserting that he had none in that hall. To this gross assault Mr. Giddings replied with becoming dignity and force. Alluding to the policy which would throw around all executive and congressional action in behalf of slavery the shield "of perpetual silence," he said he did not hold the member from Georgia so much responsible as he did "the more respectable members" who stood around him, for the display of that "brutal coarseness which nothing but the moral putridity of slavery could encourage." What he had said, he contended, were historic facts that could not be disproved. To the personal assault he should make no other reply than that he stood there clothed with the confidence of an intelligent constituency, while his antagonist, alluding to Mr. Black's failure to secure a re-election, had been discarded.



Of course, language so direct and severe did but fan to a fiercer flame the fire that was already raging, and a collision seemed inevitable. Mr. Black, approaching Mr. Giddings with an uplifted cane, said : " If you repeat those words I will knock you down." The latter repeating them, the former was seized by his friends and borne from the hall. Mr. Dawson of Louisiana, who on a previous occasion had attempted to assault him, approaching him and, cocking his pistol, profanely exclaimed : " I'll shoot him ; by G—d I'll shoot him ! " At the same moment, Mr. Causin of Maryland placed himself in front of Mr. Dawson, with his right hand upon his weapon concealed in his bosom. At this juncture four members from the Democratic side took their position by the side of the member from Louisiana, each man putting his hand in his pocket and apparently grasping his weapon. At the same moment Mr. Rayner of North Carolina, Mr. Hudson of Massachusetts, and Mr. Foot of Vermont, came to Mr. Giddings's rescue, who, thus confronted and thus supported, continued his speech. Dawson stood fronting him till its close, and Causin remained facing the latter until he returned to the Democratic side. Thus demoralized and imbruted seemed the men, even those high in station, who assumed to be the champions of slavery and its policy. Upon such men moral considerations were lost. The only forces they ever respected were those of physical power.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE "AMISTAD" CAPTIVES.

Demands of Slavery. — The "Amistad" captured by the Africans. — Taken to New London. — Africans claimed as Slaves. — Demands of the Spanish Minister. — Africans before the District Court. — Conduct of District Attorney. — Instructions of the Secretary of State. — A Committee appointed to aid the Africans. — The Attorney-General of the United States. — Africans held for Trial. — Decision of the Circuit Court. — President. — Declaration of the Secretary of State. — Appeal to the Supreme Court. — Efforts of the Committee. — Mr. Adams employed. — His Argument. — Arraignment of the President and his Cabinet. — Discharge of the Prisoners. — Labors of Lewis Tappan.

THE year 1839 was signalized by an event which, with its antecedent and attending circumstances and consequent results, produced a deep and wide-spread feeling throughout the country. Involving other nations and people, it afforded a marked illustration of what had been made manifest by other developments, — that slavery, though a local system and confined to a particular section of the country, extended its influence and urged its demands not only in other portions of the land, but in other lands. Not content with dominant control over that particular section cursed with its immediate presence, it would subsidize and subvert every section, and make every interest subservient to its exacting behests. Nor, reaching farther than its own territorial limits, did it hesitate to embroil friendly nations with its inhuman demands and unrighteous claims.

By the laws of Spain the slave-trade was prohibited; and Africans introduced by slavers, in contravention of such laws, were declared to be free. In violation of those laws, however, in June, 1839, a slaver, under Portuguese colors, landed a cargo of kidnapped Africans near Havana. A few days after, Ruiz

and Montes, Spanish slave-dealers, purchasing a number of them, obtained license from the government to transport fifty-two of them as "legal slaves" from Havana to Principe, about a hundred leagues distant. Of course, being confined in barracoons, they had no one to represent their case to the government or captain-general, and to vindicate their rightful claim to freedom. But failing to secure their liberty by legal process they took the matter into their own hands. Embarked on board the "Amistad," five days out, they rose upon the captain and crew, under the lead of Cinque, one of their number, and made an attempt to regain their liberty. In the struggle which ensued they killed the captain and cook, but spared the lives of the crew and passengers, including the slave-dealers themselves. They then ordered the vessel to be steered for their native land; but, unacquainted with navigation, they were deceived by those who profited by their ignorance, and the "Amistad" was taken into American waters. Nor did they discover their mistake until they reached Long Island Sound, and their vessel was taken into New London, Connecticut, by Lieutenant Gedney, of the United States brig "Washington." Here they were seized and committed to prison on the charge of murder, by a warrant issued by the district judge of the United States Court. Ruiz and Montes claimed the ship, cargo, and Africans, though the latter represented that they were free men. Lieutenant Gedney and some of the inhabitants of Long Island, who had arrested a number of the negroes going on shore for water, claimed salvage, as if they had been so many bales of merchandise, showing that even Northern men, when they could profit by ignoring the claims of humanity and the rights of man, were only too ready to do it.

The Spanish minister at Washington, seemingly oblivious of the infraction of the laws of his government involved in this transaction, demanded the vessel and cargo under the treaty of 1795, and also claimed that the negroes should be conveyed to Havana under the pretence of their being tried by the Spanish laws which they had violated. He pressed his claim on the ground of the preservation of order and peace in Cuba.



He even went so far as to maintain that, if they were to be tried, convicted, and executed as pirates and assassins in Connecticut, the effect would not be so salutary as if they were tried, convicted, and executed in Cuba.

Mr. Holabird was at that time district attorney of Connecticut, and Mr. Judson was district judge. The latter had made himself notorious, a few years before, by his opposition to Miss Prudence Crandall's colored school, and his zeal on that occasion had, unquestionably, secured his appointment. The district attorney hastened to write to the Secretary of State that these Africans could not be tried for murder in the courts of the United States. In his anxiety to procure their conviction, he inquired whether there were not treaty stipulations with Spain that would authorize "our government" to deliver them up to Spanish authorities; and, if so, "whether it would be done before our court sits." Of course, the Secretary of State knew there was no such treaty, and that the Constitution gave the President no power to supersede the criminal warrants of the United States. But he instructed the district attorney "to take care that no proceedings of your Circuit Court, or any other judicial tribunal, place the vessel, cargo, or slaves beyond the control of the Federal Executive." This assumption by the Secretary of State that these Africans were slaves afforded but another illustration of the influence of slavery over the government, as it indicated the stern control of the Slave Power.

The demands of Mr. Calderon, the Spanish minister, for the surrender of these Africans, who were held in slavery without even the forms of law, and who had so heroically asserted their freedom and struck brave blows to effect their return to their native land, were strenuously advocated by the Southern press and by the proslavery journals of the North. These homeless strangers found, however, humane, generous, and discreet friends. A committee, consisting of S. S. Jocelyn, Joshua Leavitt, and Lewis Tappan, was appointed in New York to solicit funds, employ counsel, and see that their interests and rights were faithfully cared for. Seth P. Staples and Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., who had been employed by this com-

mittee to act as their counsel, addressed a letter to President Van Buren, denying that these Africans were slaves; contending that in rising they only obeyed the dictates of self-defence; and praying that their case should not be decided "in the recesses of the Cabinet, where these unfriended men can have no counsel and can produce no proof; but in the halls of Justice, with the safeguards she throws around the unfriended and oppressed." This letter was submitted to Mr. Grundy, the Attorney-General of the United States. He was a devotee of slavery and a violent and bitter opponent of emancipation. As a senator he had manifested his hatred of antislavery men, and had shamelessly avowed his approval of lynching Abolitionists. Of course, he looked with horror upon the heroic conduct of these black men, and was in favor of surrendering them to the Spanish authorities. He avowed that he could not see any "legal principle upon which the government would be justified in going into an investigation for the purpose of ascertaining the facts set forth in the papers clearing the vessel from one Spanish port to another" as evidence whether or not these negroes were slaves.

The lives and liberties of these Africans were in peril; but the first law officer of the United States government saw no legal principle involved, on which the courts of the country could inquire into the genuineness of papers believed to be spurious by all persons not influenced by interest or passion. He even went so far as to say that, as these negroes were charged with violating Spanish laws, it was proper that they should be surrendered to that government, so that, if they had violated any of its laws, "they might not escape punishment." Mr. Grundy had the reputation in Tennessee of being a skilful criminal lawyer. But he went so far as even to avow it as his opinion that the proper mode of executing the treaty would be for the President to issue his order directing the marshal to deliver the vessel and cargo to such persons as might be designated by the Spanish minister. Thus, in his opinion, the President was to constitute himself "court and jury." Was it not strange indeed that he should have forgotten that the President of the United States had no authority to surrender

fugitives from justice to foreign governments unless authorized to do so by treaty stipulations?

The Circuit Court assembled at Hartford on the 17th of September. The Africans were held in custody on the charge of murder. An attachment was also issued from the District Court against the "Amistad" and her cargo in behalf of Ruiz and Montes, and of Lieutenant Gedney for salvage on vessel and cargo. The district attorney, in behalf of the government, claimed possession of the vessel; so that the negroes if they were slaves could be returned to their Spanish owners, and if they were free could be returned to Africa, according to the provisions of the treaty of 1819. Justice Thompson, of the Circuit Court, decided that the Africans could not be held for trial for murder committed on the seas, on board of a Spanish vessel; but he refused to discharge them, on the ground that they were held in custody by the District Court in consequence of libels and attachments against them.

The new Spanish minister, De Argaiz, on the 26th of November, in a communication to the Secretary of State, denied the right of the courts of the United States to take cognizance of the case, and complained that, in consequence of delay, public vengeance had not been satisfied; "for, be it recollected," he added, "that the legation of Spain does not demand the delivery of slaves, but of assassins." In another communication he states that the Secretary of State informed him that the District Court, when it should meet on the 7th of January, might order the restitution of the vessel, cargo, and negroes, and that it would be necessary for the Spanish government to take charge of them as soon as the court should pronounce its sentence. Thus the Secretary of State not only anticipated the action of the District Court, but warned the Spanish minister to take charge of these negroes as soon as the decision of the court should be known.

This minister also preferred the bold request that the President should order the transportation of the negroes in a government vessel to Cuba, immediately on their release. Nor did the President refuse even this extraordinary demand, but gave immediate orders that such a vessel should be in



readiness to receive and convey them to Cuba, with instructions to deliver them to the captain-general of that island. And that vessel was actually anchored off the harbor of New Haven three days after the court assembled, to be in readiness, as falsely alleged, to give these negroes an "opportunity to prove their freedom," when it had been asserted by the minister himself that they were "claimed as assassins, and not as slaves." Before the court assembled Lieutenants Gedney and Meade were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to go to Cuba with the negroes. They had captured the "Amistad"; and they were ordered to go to Cuba, at the expense of the United States, "for the purpose," as alleged, "of affording their testimony in any proceedings that may be ordered by the authorities of Cuba in the matter." They were not sent to Cuba to prove the freedom of the negroes; but to establish the fact that the vessel was in their possession, — a fact that would aid, not in giving them their freedom, but in sending them to death.

The court, however, decided that the papers of Ruiz and Montes were fraudulent; that the negroes were native Africans illegally imported; that they were not slaves; and that they should be sent back to Africa, according to the treaty of 1819. No sooner was the decision made than, by order of the Secretary of State, the district attorney took an appeal to the Circuit Court. Indeed, every facility was afforded by the officials of the government to the Spanish minister and to the pretended owners of the negroes to carry out their inhuman and illegal purpose. The district attorney had requested assistant counsel, and the sum of two hundred dollars was allowed for that purpose; and for that paltry amount Ralph I. Ingersoll, a Democratic politician and lawyer, who afterward represented the government at the Court of St. Petersburg, undertook the task.

The district attorney, who seemed equally intent with the Spanish minister and the administration to secure the return to Cuba and to death of these victims of slaveholding and piratical zeal, sent a messenger to Washington to correct a clerical mistake in the President's warrant; so that they

might be held, it was said, "should the pretended friends of the negroes obtain a writ of *habeas corpus*." Mr. Forsyth hastened to have the error corrected, and in returning it betrayed the spirit and purpose of the President and his Cabinet by this unmistakable declaration: "I have to state, by direction of the President, that, if the decision of the court is such as is anticipated, the order of the President is to be carried into execution, unless an appeal shall actually have been interposed. You are not to take it for granted that it will be interposed." The meaning of this instruction was that, if the counsel for the Africans did not instantly make an appeal, they were to be hurried on board the "Grampus," a national vessel, sent for the purpose, and carried to Cuba for trial. Indeed, so much in earnest were the friends of the measure that on the very day the court assembled the order had been sent by the President to the marshal for that very purpose. And so flagitious and barefaced was deemed this order, that some of Mr. Van Buren's friends afterward represented that it was issued without his knowledge by his sanguine and not over-scrupulous secretary, who seemed to have acted on the assumption of the Spanish minister that the trial and conviction of the Africans in Cuba would exert a more salutary influence than their trial and conviction here.

An appeal had been taken to the Circuit Court which, through Justice Thompson, affirmed the decision of the District Court. An appeal was then taken to the Supreme Court. Consequently, when an effort was made by Mr. Baldwin, one of the counsel for the Africans, at the September term, to have the appeal dismissed, the judge decided that, as an appeal had been taken, by the consent of both parties, to the Supreme Court, that motion could only be made there. At the same time unsuccessful efforts were made by Mr. Tappan and others, through Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Kimberly, to secure from the judge their release from prison in order that they might be more comfortably cared for by their friends, and that proper attention might be given to their education.

For this trial before the Supreme Court the most ample preparations were made. The committee, without stint of care

or money, had determined that no means within their reach should be spared to make it worthy of the august tribunal, and the more august cause. In addition to the four able lawyers already engaged, they sought the aid of John Quincy Adams, the venerable ex-president, the old man eloquent. He promptly responded to the call; and, without other fee than the consciousness of doing good, brought his great learning and forensic ability, his commanding position and well-earned reputation, to the advocacy of the cause of these helpless men.

In his plea, of great ability, learning, and eloquence, of some three hours' length, he presented the case not only with a cogent argument in behalf of his pagan clients, but with stern condemnation of the government and its obsequious officials, from the President downward, who were exhibiting such unseemly alacrity to do the bidding of the fleshmongers, and who were, he showed, carrying out, in law and fact, the slave-pirate's voyage that began on the coast of Africa. He maintained that these Africans had been torn from their own country, shipped against the laws of Spain, against the laws of the United States, against the laws of nations; that their passage on the "Amistad" was, in law and in fact, a continuance of the original voyage; that sixteen had perished through the cruel treatment they had received from Ruiz and Montes, and that their ghosts must sit heavy on their souls through the closing hours of life. He referred to the extraordinary order of the Secretary of State to the district attorney of Connecticut to take care lest the decisions of that court or any other court should place these Africans beyond the control of the President. He said it was in consequence of that order the case had reached the Supreme Court. Instead of the course he had pursued, it was the duty of the Secretary of State to have instantly answered the Spanish minister, and to have told him that his demands were utterly inadmissible, and that the President of the United States had no power to do the things he required. He should have said that he could not deliver up the ship to the owner, because that owner was dead; that the question depended upon the courts; that a declaration to



the President that the courts of the United States had no authority to try the case involved an offensive demand; and that delivering up the negroes by the President, as required, and sending them beyond the seas for trial, thus making the President a mere "constable, a catchpole," was also inadmissible, as the President had no power to arrest and deliver up any person whatever. He said the Secretary of State should have set the President right in this matter; but that he had never answered one of these demands, had never corrected one of these representations, nor asserted the rights of the nation against these extraordinary and unauthorized demands.

"He has degraded the country," said Mr. Adams, "in the face of the whole civilized world, not only by allowing these demands to remain unanswered, but by proceeding, I am obliged to say, throughout the whole transaction, as if the Executive were earnestly desirous to comply with every one of these demands." Inquiring why the Spanish minister persisted in his pretensions, he answered his own question by saying that it was because "he was not told instantly, without the delay of an hour, that this government could never admit such a claim, and would be offended if they were repeated, or any portion of them." "Yet all these claims," he said, "monstrous, absurd, and inadmissible as they are, have been urged and repeated for eighteen months on our government, and an American Secretary of State evades answering them, — evades it to such an extent that the Spanish minister reproaches him for not answering his arguments." He also referred to the singular conclusion to which Mr. Grundy, the Attorney-General, arrived in advising that the President should give an order for the delivery of the slaves, as he assumed them to be, to the Spanish authorities. He said that the American Secretary of State had told the Spanish minister that the Cabinet had adopted that opinion; and he asked why the President and his Cabinet had not acted upon it, — why they had not delivered these men, being at that time in the judicial custody of the courts of the United States, to the Spanish government. "Why," he asked, "did not the President send an order at once to the marshal to seize these men,

and ship them beyond the seas, or deliver them to the Spanish minister? I am ashamed — I am ashamed of my country — that such an opinion should have been delivered by any public officer, especially by the legal counsellor of the Executive. I am ashamed to stand up before the nations of the earth with such an opinion recorded before us as official; and, still more, adopted by the Cabinet, which did not dare to do the deed."

This terrible arraignment by Mr. Adams of the administration and its official advisers will seem to be richly merited by those who have read the correspondence. Mr. Forsyth was an able man, both in the Senate and in the Cabinet, ready in debate, and a leading man in his party. Deeply imbued with its spirit, like the extreme men of his section, he was blindly devoted to the slave system. This clouded his judgment, perverted his conscience, and led him to indorse conduct and defend positions which otherwise his training and experience in public affairs must have shown him to be wholly untenable and wrong. And yet, with all this explanation, none can read the correspondence evoked by this case — not merely of Southern men like Forsyth and Grundy, but of a Northern President and his officials in Connecticut — without sharing largely in the feeling of shame which Mr. Adams confessed in his plea before the Supreme Court.

Mr. Adams closed with a tender allusion to the change in the *personnel* and surroundings of the court since his admission to practise before it, thirty-seven years before, which greatly affected all present. The opinion of the court was delivered by Justice Story. It held that the Africans were kidnapped and unlawfully transported to Cuba; that they were purchased by Ruiz and Montes with a knowledge of the fact; that they were free; that they did not become pirates and robbers in taking possession of the "Amistad," and in attempting to regain their native country; that there was nothing in the treaty with Spain that justified the claim for their surrender; and that the United States was bound to respect their rights, as much as those of Spanish subjects. The decision was pronounced in these words: "Our opinion is, that the decree of the Circuit Court affirming that of the Dis-

trict Court, ought to be affirmed except so far as it directs the negroes to be delivered to the President, to be transported to Africa, in pursuance of the Act of the 3d of March, 1819; and as to this it ought to be reversed, and that the said negroes be declared to be free, and be dismissed from the custody of the court and go without day."

As soon as the decision of the court was pronounced, Mr. Adams addressed to Lewis Tappan this exultant note: "The captives are free. The part of the decree of the District Court which placed them at the disposal of the President of the United States, to be sent to Africa, is removed. They are to be discharged from the custody of the marshal — FREE. The rest of the decision of the court below is affirmed."

This result was very gratifying to the better portion of the country; but it must have been specially gratifying to Mr. Tappan, to whom by common consent, more than to any other man in America, were the Africans indebted for their deliverance and freedom. Mr. Leavitt, a member with Mr. Tappan of the committee, well expressed the general sentiment of those who knew: "His determined benevolence, his untiring vigilance, his never-failing resources in times of difficulty, his immovable decision of character, and his facility in the despatch of business, have often stood, humanly speaking, between them and defeat. . . . There is not another man who both could and would have done what he has done." Nor did he cease his labors when they were rescued from the very jaws of impending destruction. Leaving his large and exacting business, he spent days, and weeks even, in visiting New England and other portions of the North in their behalf, counselling with friends, soliciting subscriptions, and perfecting arrangements, which were afterward carried into effect, for making their return to Africa the beginning of the Mendi Mission, which has been sustained to the present time.

Though the claims of Ruiz and Montes, the demands of the Spanish minister, and the machinations of the administration had been baffled, and the captives restored to their native land, additional efforts were made in behalf of the claimants.

1844, Charles J. Ingersoll of Pennsylvania, chairman of



the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House of Representatives, reported a bill to pay the sum of seventy thousand dollars to the pretended owners of the "Amistad" captives. The report was long and elaborate, and its author moved the printing of ten thousand copies. Mr. Giddings at once assailed and demolished its baseless assumptions and fallacious reasonings. A motion was made to lay it on the table; but its author recoiling from the well-directed blows of Mr. Giddings, learning that Mr. Adams was intending to follow, and seeking to avert the still further damage he justly apprehended from his learning, logic, and fervid eloquence, voted himself for the motion.

Though Mr. Ingersoll's cowardly action prevented Mr. Adams from making his speech in the House, it did not prevent its publication in the papers as a speech intended to be made. Master of the subject, his feelings deeply interested by his former connection with the case, and exasperated by the dastardly and dishonorable proposition to pay these base and bloody men, his speech was a merciless exposure of the falsehoods of the report, and a deserved excoriation of him who was willing to prostitute the power and property of the government for ends so mercenary and mean. He fitly characterized the zeal manifested by the committee in behalf of these infamous slave-traders; the unfair dealing of their report with the laws of the land, its treaties, and the judges of its courts; its sympathy with slavery and the slave-trade, betrayed in its assertion that the act of Congress declaring the slave-trade piracy to be a "preposterous enactment"; and that the article in the treaty of Ghent for the entire abolition of the traffic was put in by Great Britain, from sinister motives and for selfish purposes.

Referring to Mr. Giddings's speech, he said that it "had exposed to the scorn and contempt of the House some of the false and spurious principles of international law thick sown throughout the report"; but "the putrid mass of personal slander" poured upon the district attorney and judge, and upon the judges of the Supreme Court of the United States, has not been exposed as it deserves. Mr. Ingersoll had stated that Lieutenant Gedney had taken possession of the "Amis-

tad" on the 26th of August, 1840, instead of the 26th of August, 1839; and on this mistake or misstatement he had reared his argument and made his arraignment. With scathing denunciation and withering sarcasm Mr. Adams thus characterized this change of date: "The masterpiece," he said, "of the whole report is the falsification, on its first page, of the date of their seizure of the 'Amistad' and the negroes by Lieutenant Gedney. Upon that falsehood hinges all the subsequent semblance of an argument to discredit the decision of the courts that the negroes were persons just landed, and not persons longer in the country and familiar with the language, — freemen, and not slaves. Restore the true date, August 26, 1839, and the long train of subsequent argumentation to vilify the judges and shatter their righteous judgment loses even the brightness of ingenious sophistry. It is coarse, glaring, stupid, shameless, unmitigated falsehood. Restore the true date,

‘And all the demon starts up from the toad.’”

Nor did Mr. Adams spare President Van Buren, or his Secretary of State, Mr. Forsyth, or his Attorney-General, Mr. Grundy. Referring to the order of Mr. Van Buren, which he characterized as the most extraordinary act of despotism ever performed by a President of the United States, to the marshal of Connecticut to deliver on board the schooner "Grampus" the negroes of the "Amistad," he asked: "Was this order given in a country where the rights of person are words without meaning? in the Kingdom of Dahomey? in the region where the bowstring is the warrant of execution? It was given in the land of the Declaration of Independence, in the land of the self-evident truths. It was given by the President of the United States. It was, of course, null and void; and if before the decision of the court it had been delivered to the marshal, and he had executed it, he would have staked not only the lives of the negroes, but his own head, and that of Martin Van Buren, the signer of the order, upon the event." The report and bill were never acted upon, and the country was spared the disgrace of paying a claim so preposterous and wicked; but not the disgrace of an administration and many

of the leading members of the government who favored it and gave it their personal and official sanction.

In all the acts of slavery's grim tragedy there have been few scenes which presented more elements of interest than that of the "Amistad" captives. With two continents and the wide Atlantic for its theatre; with the robber chiefs of Africa, the slave-pirates of the ocean, the representatives of a European monarchy, and an American republic for actors, seemingly engaged in a common cause and inspired by a common spirit; it presented through the whole, with dramatic variety and force, the strangest contrasts and the most unlooked-for and contradictory combinations. It presented barbarism in its rudest and most repulsive aspects, and Christianity in its most attractive and lovely attitude. It began with the midnight hunt for captives in the wilds of Africa; it closed by Christian men and women sending and accompanying these captives back to Africa, to plant churches and schools among their benighted countrymen. Through the whole, however, the one dark and hideous fact stands out that slavery is essentially the same, its adherents substantially alike. A system of violence, impatient of all restraints, whether of reason or of conscience, humanity or religion, the laws of the heart or the laws of the State, it seems mainly intent on compassing its own ends, by whatever means and at whatever hazards. It was the same in Africa and in America; in the barracoon and in the middle passage; under a monarchy or in a republic; in a Pagan, Catholic, or Protestant country.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE PRIGG CASE. — THE USE OF ITS JAILS FORBIDDEN BY MASSACHUSETTS. — AN AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION PROPOSED.

Various Interpretations of the Constitution. — Margarette Morgan. — Prigg Case. — Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. — Supreme Court of the United States. — Decision. — State Legislation not required. — Taney. — Daniel. — Jurisdiction of the Government. — Supreme Court of Massachusetts. — State Laws repealed. — Laws against the Use of Jails. — Latimer's Arrest. — Trial. — City Officers. — Excitement. — Public Meetings. — Meeting in Faneuil Hall. — Edmund Quincy. — Joshua Leavitt. — Disturbance. — Speech of Phillips. — Remonstrances. — Latimer Journal. — Popular Demonstrations. — Grey paid by Mr. Colver. — Convention. — Petition to the Legislature. — Meeting in Faneuil Hall. — Petition presented to Congress by John Quincy Adams. — Proposed Amendment of the Constitution. — Petition. — Resolutions of Massachusetts. — Singular Avowal of Mr. Wise. — Mr. Holmes. — Speech of Mr. Adams. — Report of Committee. — Massachusetts Senators. — Action of the Legislature.

A MARKED feature of the Constitution of the United States is the equivocal language in which the provisions concerning slavery are couched. At the North, one class of Abolitionists, believing that it contained the fruits of a compromise with the Slave Power, stigmatized it as a "covenant with death and an agreement with hell"; while another, pointing to the omission of all reference to the name of slavery, pronounced it "an antislavery document." At the South, where there was no doubt that the Constitution recognized and protected slavery, there were differences, too, of opinion and of interpretation concerning the clause referring to the rendition of fugitives from labor. Even the members of the Supreme Court were not agreed among themselves. Some held that it invested the States with the power and responsibility of returning the fugitive, while others held that the duty rested with the general government to carry into effect that unfortunate provision.

In the year 1826 the legislature of Pennsylvania, through the zeal and activity of the Abolition Society of that State, enacted a law punishing with severe penalties any person who should take or carry away from the State any negro with the intention of selling him as a slave, or of detaining or causing to be detained such negro as a slave for life. The object of this law was intended primarily to prevent kidnapping or selling into slavery persons of color, a practice which had been carried on to a large extent. Its provisions, however, extended not only to colored persons resident within the State, but to fugitive slaves that had sought refuge within its borders.

In 1832 Margarette Morgan, held as a slave for life by the laws of Maryland, fled from that State into Pennsylvania. Edward Prigg, being legally constituted the attorney for her owner, caused her to be arrested in 1837, and, with her children, one of whom was born more than a year after she had made her escape, taken out of the State and delivered to her mistress. For this act he was arrested, tried, and convicted in the court of York County. The case was then appealed to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and the judgment of the court below affirmed. From the Supreme Court of that State an appeal was taken to the Supreme Court of the United States.

The case excited the deepest interest throughout the country. The question to be determined was whether the act of Pennsylvania, under which Prigg had been convicted, was in contravention of the provision of the Constitution of the United States relating to persons held to service in one State escaping into another. The decision of the court was pronounced by Judge Story. That decision was in substance that Congress had exclusive power to legislate concerning fugitive slaves; that the States had no power to legislate upon the subject, either in aid of or against the rendition of fugitives; that the right of the owner to recapture his slave, wherever he might be found, was given him by the Constitution, without restriction or qualification; that he might recapture him wherever he could find him, if he could do so without illegal violence or breach of the peace; that, if he could not

do so, he might resort to the means specified in the act of Congress for the rendition of fugitives ; and that the United States could not oblige the States to enforce its laws by their magistrates, but must depend upon its own courts and officers. Of course, the act of Pennsylvania, in view of these opinions, was pronounced unconstitutional and void. All the judges, with the exception of Justice McLean and Justice Thompson, held that the master might seize his slave and remove him out of the State in utter disregard of its laws. Those two judges held that after a seizure was made the master was bound to prosecute his claim, according to the provisions of the Act of 1793, before he could remove such fugitive from the State into which he had escaped.

By this decision the personal liberty of the inhabitants of the free States was brought into constant peril, the right of trial by jury was practically denied, and the writ of *habeas corpus* was practically suspended. One portion of the decision, however, proved to be in the interests of freedom. It was decided that States could not legislate in aid of or against the rights of the slaveholder ; that Congress had no power to compel State officers to act under its laws ; and that any action of State officers under the Act of 1793 was purely voluntary. By this decision of the Court the States might prohibit their magistrates and other officers from any interference in cases arising under the Act of 1793 for the rendition of fugitives. Chief Justice Taney and Justice Daniel differed from the judgment of the Court on this point. The chief justice thought the States were not prohibited, but, on the contrary, that it was enjoined upon them to aid and protect the owner in his attempts to recover his slave found within their territories. He thought, if the State authorities were absolved from all obligation to protect the owners in their attempts to regain their slaves, that the Act of 1793 scarcely deserved the name of a remedy. "It is only necessary," he said, "to state the provision of this law in order to show how ineffectual and delusive is the remedy provided by Congress if State authority is forbidden to come to its aid." Justice Daniel said, if the right of arrest and detention, with a



view of restoration to the owner, belonged solely to the Federal government, the master would be deprived of protection and security, and would be defeated in his right of property.

By this decision of five judges out of nine the rendition of fugitive slaves was declared to be exclusively within the jurisdiction of the Federal government. This was the law of the land. By it slavery was made a municipal institution, not recognized beyond the State tolerating it, excepting the clause in the Constitution relating to fugitives. The doctrine of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, that the authority of a master over his slaves did not extend to those taken by him into a State where slavery is prohibited, but was strictly limited to the case of fugitives who had escaped against his will, was incidentally affirmed. To his family and intimate personal friends Judge Story pronounced this decision of the court as "a triumph of freedom." Though this decision of the Supreme Court seemed and was evidently designed to be strongly favorable to the slaveholders, it became, by legitimate inference and by its practical workings, often a real means of protection and defence. Several of the States had enacted laws in aid of the rendition of fugitive slaves, which had afforded effective assistance for that purpose. But after this decision of the Supreme Court, these laws in several of the States were repealed, and in some States statutes were enacted forbidding either such co-operation by State officials or the use of jails; so that, from the time of this decision to the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, it had been found much more difficult to secure the recapture and return of the increasing number of fugitives fleeing from their masters.

In May, 1837, a slave was found secreted on board the ship "Boston," of Maine, homeward bound from Georgia; who, after landing, escaped to Canada. The captain was charged with slave-stealing, and the governor of Georgia demanded him as a fugitive from justice. But the governor of Maine refused to comply with the requisition, as the laws of that State considered slaves persons rather than property. In consequence of this refusal to surrender the captain of the vessel, the legis-

lature of Georgia adopted resolutions calling upon Congress to amend the laws concerning fugitives from justice, so as to compel governors of States to deliver up persons charged with slave-stealing. These resolutions were presented to the Senate of the United States, warmly advocated by the Georgia senators, and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary; but no action was taken.

Soon afterward a similar case occurred between Virginia and New York, which excited still deeper interest, as it became the subject of a protracted controversy between the two States. A negro named Isaac, claimed to be the slave of John G. Colby of Norfolk, was found in July, 1839, secreted on board the schooner "Robert Carter" of New York. On her arrival at the port of New York she was boarded, and Isaac was seized and taken to Virginia without any legal examination, and in defiance of the laws of the State against kidnapping. A demand was made by the executive of Virginia upon the governor of New York for the surrender of Peter Johnson, Edward Smith, and Isaac Gansey, colored men, accused of aiding and abetting Isaac's escape, or of slave-stealing. Governor Seward refused to surrender these men, because no State could demand the surrender of a fugitive from justice for an act which was made criminal only by its own legislation, — an act, too, which was not only innocent in itself, but humane and praiseworthy.

In 1840 the legislature of New York passed an act to extend the right of trial by jury. It applied especially to persons claimed as fugitive slaves. The refusal of the governor to surrender these persons, and this legislation, provoked retaliatory legislation on the part of Virginia. The legislature of that State passed an act to prevent the citizens of New York from carrying slaves out of that Commonwealth, requiring that all vessels of that State should be inspected before leaving any of its ports. It also authorized the governor of Virginia to suspend the act, whenever the governor of New York should comply with the requisition of Virginia for the surrender of the alleged fugitives from justice, and should repeal the act to extend the right of trial by jury should be repealed.

This Virginia controversy caused much feeling in the country, led to a long correspondence, and challenged the attention of jurists and statesmen on account of the important questions it involved. Governor Seward was sharply criticised and severely censured by many; but he firmly maintained his position, and vindicated with signal ability the opinions he advanced. The Democrats, securing majorities in both houses of the legislature, in 1842, were prompt to condemn the governor and espouse the cause of Virginia. They passed a resolution setting forth the governor's refusal to surrender persons charged with stealing a slave in Virginia with the reasons assigned; but affirming that, in their opinion, "the stealing of a slave within the jurisdiction of Virginia was a crime within the meaning of the Constitution."

These Democratic legislators requested the governor to transmit these resolutions to the executive of Virginia. Governor Seward declined to comply with the request. He assigned as his reason that he could not do so without either silently acquiescing in its doctrine or accompanying it with his protest; that the former would be a palpable dereliction of constitutional duty, and the latter would not tend to enhance the credit of the State. He assured the legislature that he remained of "the opinion that beings possessed of the physical, moral, and intellectual faculties common to the human race, cannot, by the force of any constitution or laws, be goods or chattels, or a thing; and that nothing but goods, chattels, and things can be the subject of larceny, stealing, or theft." He also affirmed that the cherished principles of civil liberty forbade him to recognize such a "natural inequality among men as the resolution of the legislature seems to me to assume, and from contributing in any way to perpetuate the inequalities of political condition, from which results a large portion of the evils of human life."

In 1842 a case occurred in Ohio which gained extensive notoriety, not only from the rulings and decisions it called forth, but from the length of time it was in the courts, and the eminent legal and forensic ability enlisted in its prosecution. Mr. Van Zandt, a worthy Christian farmer of Hamilton County,



returning from the Cincinnati market, took into his wagon nine escaping Kentucky slaves. About sixteen miles from the city he was stopped, in broad daylight, by persons in pursuit of the fugitives. Seven of the nine were taken — two escaping — without legal process back to Kentucky and lodged in the jail at Covington. The kidnappers were indicted by the grand jury of that county, defended by John B. Weller, late member of Congress, and Governor Corwin, and acquitted.

Mr. Van Zandt did not so escape. He was indicted, tried before the Circuit Court of the United States, Justice McLean presiding, and defended by Thomas Morris and Salmon P. Chase. Mr. Morris in his opening plea boldly advanced and ably defended the fundamental principles of human rights and the paramount claims of justice, equity, and humanity. Mr. Chase closed with an argument of three hours' length. Of it Dr. Bailey, editor of the "Philanthropist," said: "Whether viewed as a legal argument or a specimen of forensic eloquence, it has seldom been equalled. He closed with one of the finest efforts of oratory we ever heard. The blind Samson of Longfellow was brought upon the stage; and when we say that so far from impairing this noble allusion, as used by the poet, he really added to its magnificence and power, we say but the truth. Not a foot-fall was heard, not a movement made. Every form was a breathing statue, — every eye was fixed upon the blind Samson, standing between the massive pillars, while the jeering multitude scoffed at his rights, mocked his apparent helplessness, sported themselves with his bonds, till, bowing himself in the greatness of his strength, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the temple was in ruins and the multitude buried beneath them."

Mr. Southgate of Kentucky closed in behalf of the prosecution. Justice McLean charged the jury in accordance with the principles enunciated in the Prigg case, and the jury brought in a verdict of guilty; and the good man, whose crime was that of giving a few weary, foot-sore strangers a ride of a few miles, was mulcted in a fine of twelve hundred dollars, while the desperadoes who seized them without forms of law and against every claim of right and humanity received for

their base and brutal conduct a large reward. How could a nation, not only permitting but clothing with the sanction of its laws such cruel perversions of justice, hope to escape the retribution due to such crimes? The case was taken on appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States, and argued, in 1846, by Mr. Seward and Mr. Chase. Justice Woodbury delivered the opinion of the court, in which the constitutionality of the law of 1793 was maintained, and the exceptions taken by the counsel of Van Zandt were overruled.

The decision in the Prigg case was also brought to a practical test in Massachusetts in October, 1842. George Latimer, a native of Virginia, was seized in the city of Boston, without warrant, at the request of James B. Grey of Norfolk, of that State, who claimed him as his slave. A writ of *habeas corpus* was at once sued out in his favor by his counsel, Samuel E. Sewall and Amos B. Merrill. After argument Chief Justice Shaw decided that the statute of the United States authorized the owner of the fugitive to arrest him in any State to which he might have fled, and, upon proving his claim before a court established by the United States, to carry him beyond the jurisdiction of the State. The court decided, too, that the claimant should have a reasonable time to obtain his proof, and the writ was denied.

Elbridge Gerry Austin, attorney for the city of Boston, then applied in behalf of the claimant, Grey, to Justice Story for a certificate that Latimer was his slave; and also for time to procure evidence from Norfolk. This motion was strenuously resisted; but the judge ruled that it had always been the custom to grant the time, and a written order was given that Latimer should remain in the custody of Grey until the time of trial. The city attorney readily acted for the claimant, and Nathaniel Coolidge, city jailer, consented to be Grey's agent and slave-keeper. A writ of personal replevin, provided for in the Act of 1837, securing trial by jury to persons charged with being slaves, was sued out before Chief Justice Shaw. The case was ably argued by Charles M. Ellis and Samuel E. Sewall; but the chief justice declared that by the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of Prigg the remedy sought for

was illegal, and Latimer was left in the custody of the claimant in Boston jail.

Great excitement pervaded the city and State. Public meetings were held in several cities and towns. A meeting was held on Sabbath evening, 30th of October, in Faneuil Hall. At an early hour the hall was thronged by an immense multitude. It was estimated that there were four thousand persons present, most of whom came for the purpose of expressing their condemnation of the arrest of Latimer, and of the proceedings growing out of that arrest. The speakers were continually interrupted by an organized band of ruffians, who strove by hideous noises to break up the meeting, in which they were partially successful. Samuel E. Sewell presided, and a series of resolutions were presented by Joshua Leavitt, protesting "by all the glorious memories of the Revolutionary struggle, in the names of justice, liberty, and right, in the awful name of God, against the deliverance of George Latimer into the hands of his pursuers."

These resolutions were seconded by Edmund Quincy. Latimer, he said, had not sought his deliverance from a system, the vilest beneath the sun, by an appeal to arms, as did the men who thronged that hall in early times to create the Revolution; but he had resorted to the simplest natural right, the right to escape. "He turns," he said, "his face to the North Star, which he had been falsely told hung over a land of liberty. He threads the forest, he hurries by night across the green swamps, he lies concealed by day in the tangled cane-brake, he dares the treacherous morass, he fords rivers, he scales mountains; but he shuns the face of Christian man as his deadliest foe! At last he reaches the Free States; but he rests not from his pilgrimage until he has taken sanctuary in the very birth-place of liberty. Here he places his feet on our hearthstone, and demands hospitality and protection. And with what reception met this demand upon the humanity, the Christianity, the love of liberty of Boston? The signal for the chase is given; the immortal game is on foot; a pack of bloodhounds in human shape is put upon the scent; they pursue, seize, and hold him down, with the oppressor himself for the master of the hunt,



and the second judicial magistrate in the nation for the whipper in! Your police officers and jailers, under the compulsion of no law, are the voluntary partakers of this hideous case; and your streets and your prisons form the hunting-ground on which the quarry is run down and secured."

Joshua Leavitt read letters from John Quincy Adams, George Bancroft, Samuel Hoar, William B. Calhoun, and other distinguished persons, amid continued interruptions. Charles Lenox Remond and Frederick Douglass sought to address the meeting; but the uproar was so great that they could not be heard. Appeals were made by George S. Hillard in behalf of free speech, but they were unheeded. Wendell Phillips then, amid hisses and shouts and continued uproar, addressed the noisy assemblage. He characterized, with his terrible severity and point, their domineering conduct toward the slave and his friends, and their craven subserviency to the master and his minions. He branded them as cowards, that shook the chains that bound them to the car of slavery, but dared not break them. "When I look," he said, "upon these crowded thousands, and see them trample on their consciences and the rights of their fellow-men at the bidding of a piece of parchment, I say, 'My curse be upon the Constitution of these United States!'"

This conduct of the mob excited general indignation, and strengthened the remonstrances of the city and State against the disgraceful proceedings. A newspaper, conducted by Dr Henry I. Bowditch and William F. Channing, called the "Latimer Journal and North Star," scattered facts and arguments among the people, and intensified the excitement of the public mind.

The alacrity evinced in this case by the city attorney, the police officers, the jailer, and sheriff excited the deepest indignation. A petition signed by citizens of character and influence was presented to the sheriff, demanding the dismissal of the jailer. Another petition was prepared, requesting Governor Davis to dismiss the sheriff unless he removed the jailer. This unexpected popular demonstration brought the officials and claimant to terms. Grey and his advisers evinced

their readiness to release Latimer for a consideration ; but the persons who had taken an active part in the case, believing, as matters then stood, that his release would be effected, refused to pay anything at all. But the Rev. Nathaniel Colver, apprehensive that Latimer might be smuggled out of the State, agreed to pay the sum of four hundred dollars, on the delivery of free papers and the surrender of the power of attorney to reclaim his wife. The offer was accepted, and Latimer stepped forth from Leverett Street jail, amid the general rejoicings, a freeman.

While these events were transpiring in Massachusetts the press of Virginia teemed with denunciations. Inflammatory appeals were made to the people of the South. Public meetings were held, and a demand for redress or retaliation was made upon the legislature. The governor made a requisition for Latimer as a fugitive from justice ; but Governor Davis refused to comply with it.

The matter, however, did not end here. A convention was held, and a form of petition to the legislature of Massachusetts was adopted, praying that body to forbid all persons holding office under the laws of the State from aiding in the arrest or detention of persons claimed as fugitives from slavery ; to forbid the use of jails or other public property for their detention ; and to propose amendments to the Federal Constitution that should forever separate the people of that State from all connection with slavery. Another petition was prepared for Congress, praying for such laws and such proposed amendments to the Constitution as would relieve the Commonwealth from all further participation in this crime of oppression. By the faithful and well-directed labors, through conventions, meetings, and other agencies, of Henry I. Bowditch, William F. Channing, and Frederick S. Cabot, the committee chosen for that purpose, more than sixty-five thousand signatures were obtained to a petition to the legislature, and fifty thousand to a petition to Congress. At a meeting held in Faneuil Hall, over which John Pierpont presided, John Quincy Adams was unanimously selected to take charge of the petition to Congress, and Charles Francis Adams to present the petition to the legisla-

ture. The latter petition was presented to the House by Mr. Adams ; then taken to the Senate, where it was presented and referred to the appropriate committee.

Mr. Adams, from the joint committee to whom the Latimer petition was referred, made a learned and elaborate report, in which he showed how "the spirit of slavery, flying from one paragraph of the Constitution to another, seeks to wrest out of each in turn the necessary strength to maintain itself." He contended that the great object with Massachusetts was to free herself from all responsibility, direct or indirect, for the continuance and spread of slavery in the United States ; and that while there were several passages in the Constitution connecting the free States with slavery, the slave representation was effecting "by slow but sure degrees the overthrow of all the old but noble principles that were embodied in the Federal Constitution. To that," he said, "let the public attention be exclusively directed. If, in the process necessary to the procuring the removal of it from the instrument of government, it should become advisable to consider the points of minor consequence, this may be done then as easily as now, and with more effect. The withdrawal from the Constitution of the slave representation would alone, in the opinion of your committee, be of force enough to carry with it the remaining obstacles to that complete and effective separation from all connection with slavery which the petitioners desire." The committee reported a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States, restricting representation to "free persons" alone. They also reported a bill to the legislature requiring all State officials to refrain from rendering aid in the recapture of fugitive slaves, and also forbidding the use of its jails for their confinement. The resolution was adopted and the bill was passed.

The petition to Congress, headed by George Latimer and signed by fifty thousand of the citizens of Massachusetts, was placed upon the desk of Mr. Adams. It produced a great sensation. Several Southern representatives manifested deep indignation. Even Mr. Botts, who had opposed the gag rule, declared that it was "a hornet's nest, full of fifty thousand



young hornets." He was willing to receive the petition of the poorest and humblest citizen ; but he asserted that George Latimer was "not a citizen of the United States."

It is stated, on the authority of David Lee Child, that to a Virginian, who came to Mr. Adams's seat and asked who George Latimer was, he replied : "He is the son of a very respectable gentleman of Norfolk, in Virginia, a member of one of the most distinguished and respectable families in that State, and a citizen of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." Mr. Adams moved to suspend the rules relating to petitions, and at the end of the third day he obtained a vote upon his motion, for which there were eighty to one hundred and six, every Northern Whig voting for a suspension of the rules, and thirty-five Northern Democrats voting against it. Failing to obtain a suspension of the rules, Mr. Adams placed the petition in the hands of the Clerk of the House under the standing rule.

The resolution of Massachusetts, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, so as to base representation upon "free persons," was presented to the House by Mr. Adams, on the 21st of December, 1843. He moved its reference to a select committee of nine members. Mr. Wise immediately arose, and, with great warmth of manner, said he would now strike his flag. From that day forth he would oppose nothing, and leave it to the gentleman from Massachusetts and others to take the responsibility. Lifting his hands, amid great sensation among the members, who crowded around him, he exclaimed : "I say solemnly before God, as a Southern man, that we are worsted in this fight. From this day forth and forever I withdraw from the fight. I say to my constituents that, the way this battle has been fought, there is no hope for your rights. Your interests are doomed to be destroyed." He declared, in the name of God and of his country, that he left the awful responsibility upon the North to infringe the Constitution. He solemnly pledged himself, however, to renew the battle, — not on that floor, but before his constituents and the people of the country.

Mr. Holmes of South Carolina said the gentleman from Virginia might retire from the contest ; but he would renew the

battle, day after day, so long as the waves were rolling from the North and threatening to overwhelm them. But, instead of relinquishing the struggle on that floor, he would sound the tocsin, and give battle at once with the gentleman from Massachusetts, and those who were with him engaged in fierce hostility against their countrymen, and who were then striving to take from them their rights of representation.

Amid the excitement Mr. Adams remained calm. He reminded members that these were the resolutions of the Democratic legislature of Massachusetts, for in both branches the Democrats were in the majority. He expressed his regret that the gentlemen from Virginia and South Carolina, one of whom renounced the "war" and the other renewed it, should indulge in such martial and belligerent figures of speech. That hall, he said, was no fit place for battle of any kind. It was a place for deliberation; it was a place for the deliberation of friends met to consult upon themes of common interest. He said that Wise had never done a "wiser" thing than to abandon a position no longer tenable; and he advised Holmes to strip off the glittering armor in which he had clad himself, take off his epaulets and throw away his sword, and follow the example of Wise, and retire from a position which, "thank God Almighty," was no longer tenable. He said he was not, and never had been, an Abolitionist in the sense of any abolition society he was acquainted with; but he believed, with Jefferson, that the God of nature had decreed the freedom of the slaves, and the sooner it came the better. In the sense that Thomas Jefferson was an Abolitionist he was one. He hoped the day would come when slavery would be a word without a meaning in the English language, when there should not be found a slave on all the earth. That, he thought, would be the consummation of the Christian religion; the fulfilment of the glorious promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, confirmed by the gospel of the New. He said he had little companionship with antislavery associations. He held his opinions from God and from the Declaration of Independence, which was permitted to hang in that hall, "however any portion of it may in practice have been turned out of doors." He

closed by expressing his devotion to the Union and to the Constitution, and with the emphatic denial of the power of the House to refuse to receive a petition for the amendment of any of its parts.

The resolutions were then referred to a select committee of which Mr. Adams was made chairman. There were six reports. The report signed by Mr. Adams and Mr. Giddings, and written by Mr. Adams, was a terrible arraignment of the supporters of slavery, especially for their denial of the right of petition. It asserted that slavery was opposed to the teachings of the gospel; that the Declaration of Independence embodied the essential doctrines of Christianity; and that it constituted a sacred pledge, in the name of God, to abolish slavery as soon as practicable, and to substitute freedom in its stead. It vindicated the action of Massachusetts, in proposing the amendment for the purification of the common Constitution from that unnatural and inconsistent element of a slave representation in the government of a free people. The report proposed to refer the question to the next session of Congress. While a majority of the committee could not concur in signing either of the several reports prepared, they did agree in the opinion that the amendment proposed by Massachusetts should not be recommended; and the House adopted a resolution to that effect, with only thirteen dissenting votes.

When the resolutions were presented to the Senate by Mr. Bates, they were denounced in vituperative and violent language. Mr. King of Alabama characterized them as seditious, incendiary, and revolutionary, deserving the condemnation and execration of every well-wisher of the government. To this assault upon Massachusetts and her people, and to these misrepresentations of the proposed amendment, no reply was made. Mr. Bates, avowing that he had no desire to excite discussion, asked that the resolutions be laid on the table and printed. But this modest request was denied by the chivalric defenders of State sovereignty; and the Senate refused to print them by a vote of more than two to one. To add to this indignity, the resolutions of Georgia replying to those of Massachusetts had been received and ordered to be printed.



Mr. Bates, though reminding the Senate that Georgia had received a courtesy which had been denied to Massachusetts, did not renew the motion to print, nor was there any Southern senator sufficiently magnanimous to do it. Instead of feeling any humiliation at such discourtesy, the slaveholding members rather gloried in the deed as an evidence of their power, and of the helplessness of those they held in a vassalage hardly less degrading than that of their slaves. As Force was the only divinity they worshipped, or whose claims they heeded, the voices of justice, courtesy, and magnanimity fell but lightly upon their ears.

This indignity put upon Massachusetts was, however, keenly felt by her people. Nor were they satisfied with the action of their senators. They thought that Mr. Bates and Mr. Choate should have repelled the aspersions cast upon their State, denounced the discourtesy of the Senate, and vindicated the action of the legislature. That feeling soon found utterance in the legislature itself.

When the resolutions against the annexation of Texas were pending in the Senate, Henry Wilson of Middlesex moved an amendment requesting Massachusetts senators in Congress to prevent, if possible, the consummation of that slaveholding scheme. The resolution implied a rebuke for their timid action, and Mr. Wilson commented freely on what he characterized as their want of spirit. He wished to call their attention to the fact that upon the question of slavery the legislature was in sober earnest; that it wished "them to feel, to think, and to act as Massachusetts men, who have been reared under the institutions of the Pilgrim Fathers, should think, feel, and act."

Mr. Wilson's amendment was unanimously adopted. The resolution, however, was amended in the House by the insertion of the words "Representatives in Congress," which, of course, destroyed its significance and thwarted its purpose. But the Senate refused to concur in the amendment, and firmly adhered to the original resolution. Charles Francis Adams spoke strongly against receding. The people, he said, were dissatisfied with the action of their senators, and it was due

to them that they should know what the people expected of them. The resolution said to them that Massachusetts would forgive the past if they would make great exertions for the future. There was a sharp debate in the House upon the question of receding from its amendment. Mr. Boutwell, then the leader of the Democratic party, spoke in favor of receding; and Mr. Richardson, a young Democratic member from Woburn, advocated the same policy. "Our Representatives in Congress," he said, "have behaved themselves like men. They have stood like rocks, like beacons in the wide waste; but our Senators did not dare to rise when the fame, honor, and integrity of Massachusetts were attacked." The House, however, refused, by a vote of one hundred and fifteen to one hundred and twenty-eight, to recede from its amendment. A committee of conference was appointed, and it was agreed to strike out of the resolutions that which referred to the senators. Mr. Saltonstall, chairman of the committee of conference, on the part of the House, and who, perhaps, had done more than any one to prevent the passage of the resolution in that body, assured the senatorial members of the committee that the object for which the resolution had been introduced had been already attained, and that both of the senators felt very keenly the criticisms which had been made in the legislature upon their course.

Virginia went farther than any of her sister States in the condemnation of the proposition of Massachusetts to amend the Constitution. Her legislature not only denounced the proposition, but requested the governor to return to the executive of Massachusetts the resolutions that had been transmitted to him. This act of discourtesy not only showed how deeply the proposed amendment incensed the Slave Power, but also a lack of good breeding and comity of manners, to which qualities the slave-masters ever laid large claim, but of which this and similar acts revealed them to be sadly destitute. The governor complied with the request. The action of Virginia was transmitted by Governor Briggs to the legislature, and referred to a special committee. Linus Child, its chairman, reported that the action of Virginia was without precedent;

in derogation of the rights of the States ; and in violation of the courtesies which should characterize the proceedings of sister States. The doctrines embodied in the original resolutions were restated and reaffirmed, and this report was unanimously adopted in both houses. To aggravate the discourtesy shown to Massachusetts, while it reveals and illustrates the constant humiliations imposed upon the free States by the insolent power that ruled, the resolutions of Virginia, in which a deliberate insult had been offered to a sister State, were presented in the Senate of the United States, and were courteously received by that body, which had, with studied disrespect, refused to print the original resolution to which these were the response.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### INTERMARRIAGE LAW OF MASSACHUSETTS. — CASTE.

The Law of Massachusetts. — Petitions. — Report of Mr. Lincoln. — Debate. — Mr. Davis's Report. — Mr. Bradburn's Bill. — General Howe's Bill. — Sharp Debate. — Repeal of the Law. — Colored Persons excluded from the Cars. — Scene on the Eastern Railroad. — Action of the Legislature. — Colored Schools. — Controversy in Nantucket. — Petitions to the Legislature. — Mr. Barrett's Bill. — Defeated. — Mr. Wilson's Motion to reconsider. — Earnest Debate. — Reconsidered. — Bill passed. — Action of Boston School Committee.

THE Divine declaration that what a man soweth that also shall he reap is quite as true of nations as of individuals. Nowhere has the retributive nature of sin appeared more manifest than in the history of American slavery. For long years after the guilty cause has disappeared have the wretched effects remained. Even in Massachusetts, first among the old thirteen States to discard slavery, did the consequences linger in some of her laws, in the customs of society, and in prejudices which in many minds, with unreasoning and unfeeling pertinacity, set at naught the principles of justice and humanity, to say nothing of the sublime principles of Christianity. Like the vicious indulgences of youth, though discarded in riper years, it left its enfeebling effects in the system. Though early in form removed, it left many bitter legacies behind to test the temper of the people and make work for after generations. The law against the intermarriage of blacks with whites, the rules in many cities and towns against colored children attending the same schools with whites, and the regulations on some railroads excluding blacks from the cars of whites, were examples.

These invidious discriminations and obnoxious regulations were among the early objects of assault by the Abolitionists.

In the session of 1839 several petitions were presented, praying for the repeal of the act against intermarriage. Some of these petitions were from women,—a fact which subjected them to special reproach not only in the public press, but in the legislature itself. The petitions were referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, which reported that the petitioners have leave to withdraw. This report was made by William Lincoln of Worcester, brother of the ex-governor, Levi Lincoln. Its spirit and purport may be gathered from a single paragraph: “Lest future historians should form an erroneous estimate of the manners and morals of the age, it is desirable to afford these persons, styling themselves ladies, an opportunity to reconsider their opinions on matrimonial and constitutional rights, and to remove their names from the rolls on which they are written.”

The repeal of the law was vigorously resisted by Franklin Dexter, an eminent lawyer of Boston. Minot Thayer, too, a veteran member of the House, opposed any legislation in a vituperative speech. Referring to a petition signed by a large number of ladies in Dorchester, he had the bad taste to express the opinion that there were not ten virtuous women among them.

George Bradburn, then a representative from Nantucket, defended the petitioners, and advocated the principle embodied in their petition. He replied with merciless severity to the arguments of Dexter and Thayer; and in response to their assertion that the repeal would encourage amalgamation, he asserted that, on the contrary, it would most effectually discourage it.

At the session of 1840, George T. Davis, then a representative from Greenfield, reported in favor of repealing the law. The report maintained that the act sprung from social prejudices; was based on the idea of social inequality; was unequal and invidious in its operations; facilitated injustice and promoted licentiousness. “This law,” it said, “is the last relic of the old slave code of Massachusetts, and is the only legislative recognition to be found in our statute-book of inequality among the different races of our citizens. It stands in direct

and odious contrast with all our principles and our practice in other particulars. It gives the lie to the sentiments which we have heretofore expressed to Congress and the world on the subject of slavery ; for, by denying to our colored fellow-citizens the privileges and immunities of freemen, we virtually assert their inequality, and justify that theory of negro slavery which represents it as a necessary state of tutelage and guardianship."

In the debate that followed, Mr. Bradburn maintained that the law had not the word "white" in it originally, but provided that no person of a Christian nation should marry a negro or mulatto ; and that in 1786 Indians were included, and the word "white" then inserted. He asserted that the law was unconstitutional, authorized robbery, encouraged amalgamation, and abrogated the law of God. Mr. Theophilus Parsons, then a member from the city of Boston, admitted that he had been opposed to the passage of the bill ; but his objections had been overcome, and he should then vote for it. Thayer, Dexter, and Lincoln, who had so strenuously opposed the repeal at the preceding session, continued their opposition. If they were less vituperative, they were no less determined in their hostility. The bill passed the House by a majority of one. It then passed the Senate ; but was defeated in the House on its engrossment.

But the Abolitionists and the other friends of equal rights were persistent. Petitions were presented in 1841 ; and Mr. Bradburn, from a committee to which they were referred, brought in a bill to repeal the obnoxious law, accompanied by an elaborate report. It failed, however, in the House. A similar bill was reported to the Senate by General Appleton Howe. It passed that body by the casting vote of its president, Daniel P. King, afterward a representative in Congress. It was, however, defeated in the House by a majority of thirty-six. Not discouraged by this defeat, the antislavery men of Massachusetts again appealed to the people and to the legislature. At the next session a bill was reported in the Senate by Seth Sprague, Jr., and passed that body by a vote of twenty-four to nine.



In the House an earnest debate arose. Mr. Marcy, a Democratic member from Greenwich, denounced the bill as an innovation, which would be speedily followed by another, allowing the blacks to ride in the cars with the whites. Mr. Gibbens, a merchant of Boston, declared that he would rather follow his daughter to the tomb than that she should be married to a black man. He denounced the measure as an experiment fraught with the most disastrous consequences to the manners and morals of the people. John C. Park of Boston vehemently opposed the passage of the bill, and maintained the constitutionality and expediency of the existing law. The legislature, he said, could pass laws for the preservation of hens and fishes, and for the improvement of the breeds of cattle, sheep, and pigs; but when the question came of preserving their own race from the deterioration which must inevitably follow amalgamation, their constitutional scruples were interposed.

Seth J. Thomas, a representative from Charlestown, one of the leaders of the Democratic party, declared that conservatism was the "party of yesterday"; but he belonged to the party of to-day, and was in favor of turning the world topsy turvy, providing things were made better by it. "The black man," he said, "will have his day, and I want him to have it peaceably, else he will be obliged to use force, which is the last resort of kings. And if that necessity is resorted to, although I should regret it, yet in the great cause of human rights I should rush into the battle as gladly as I would to a bridal-feast." His subsequent course hardly warranted quite so confident a boast. He did not anticipate, when he uttered it, that in a few years he would be found, not rushing to the rescue of the fearful and fainting fugitive, but as the paid attorney in the ignoble work of remanding him back to the bondage from which he was vainly striving to escape.

Charles Francis Adams, complimenting Mr. Park on his eloquent speech, proceeded to reply to it in a clear and unanswerable argument. Henry Wilson, a representative from Natick, avowed himself in favor of the repeal of the act, as it was founded on inequality and caste. No act of that

kind, he asserted, dishonored other New England States. He declared that the bill was not inspired by political, but by humane motives ; and, though it might be defeated then, it would ultimately be enacted. It was only a question of time. It was shown by John P. Robinson of Lowell that the law had been passed as a protection against heathenism and paganism, that the question of its constitutionality had been evaded by the Supreme Court, that it had become a dead letter, and that it ought to be repealed. Prejudice and passion, however, again triumphed, and the bill was defeated by a majority of four.

At the next session the Democrats had a majority in both houses of the legislature. A bill repealing the law was reported in the Senate by George Hood of Essex County, which passed without a division. In the House it was opposed by Gibbens and Park of Boston, and supported by Whitmarsh of Seekonk, Prince of Essex, Wheatland of Salem, and Adams of Boston ; but it passed by a decided majority.

It was the same unchristian prejudice, with far less apparent reason, which induced the regulations adopted by railroads to exclude persons of color from the ordinary passenger cars, and compelled them to ride in cars by themselves, or sometimes, without regard to tastes, character, or means, in "second-class" cars, bare and comfortless, the enforced receptacle of all who from any cause would not or could not take their seats in the first class. The two railroad corporations in Massachusetts, which were prominent in making and enforcing these odious regulations, were the Eastern and New Bedford. On the New Bedford road, outrages were often perpetrated on persons of color, and sometimes on those friends who remonstrated against their treatment. In the year 1841 David Ruggles, a colored man of New York, who had aided six hundred of his countrymen in escaping from servitude, was ejected from the cars, against the earnest protest of Rev. John M. Spear, for the simple offence of taking a seat with white passengers. He brought an action in the Police Court of New Bedford against the employees of the company for an aggravated assault ; but Justice Crapo promptly discharged the defendants.

Scenes of violence were of frequent occurrence on the Eastern Railroad. Colored persons of intelligence and character were, in several instances, violently dragged from the cars occupied by white passengers; and in some cases their friends, who remonstrated against such brutality, were treated in like manner. Among the persons forcibly ejected from these cars was Frederick Douglass, among the most gifted of his race. The general agent of the Massachusetts Anti-slavery Society was repeatedly insulted, while travelling upon that road, for remonstrating against its unjust and inhuman usages; and in one instance he received blows and kicks, the effects of which were felt for weeks. On one occasion a well-known colored man being ejected, and Dr. Daniel Mann and several white passengers remonstrating against such conduct, the latter were dragged from the cars, and prohibited from continuing their journey "unless they behaved themselves." Dr. Mann brought an action in the police court of Boston against the conductor of the train; but he failed to obtain any redress for such high-handed outrages.

This conduct excited the deepest indignation. Public meetings were held, the managers of the road censured, and the interference of the legislature invoked. The "Lynn Record," edited by Daniel Henshaw, a gentleman of integrity, character, and moral courage, denounced the ruffianism of such proceedings in the most direct and fearless manner.

In spite, however, of all remonstrances, the managers of that corporation persisted in the enforcement of their harsh and unjust regulations. A striking instance of this was manifested on the return from his foreign tour of Charles Lenox Remond. He was a native of Salem, a gentleman of intelligence, of personal worth, and prepossessing manners. In England, where he had spent nearly two years, he had vindicated the cause of the oppressed, and had won the confidence and applause of the British Abolitionists. He was everywhere hailed as the champion of his race, and treated with the most friendly and respectful consideration. He bore from England the warmest sympathies and best wishes of the friends of emancipation. He was commissioned to bear the address



of sixty thousand Irishmen to their countrymen in America, headed by the names of Daniel O'Connell and Father Mathew. Arriving in Boston, he went to the Eastern Railroad Station to take passage for his home in Salem. He was not allowed, however, to take his seat with the other passengers, but compelled to occupy what was called the "Jim Crow" car. Several of his white friends, wishing to welcome him on his return, met him at the station, and took seats with him. They were ordered, however, by the conductor, to leave voluntarily, or to be removed by force. Thus was this gentleman of character and culture, fresh from his travels and the hospitalities of the best families of England, rudely and roughly treated on his arrival in his native State. And not only that, but so inveterate and implacable was the prejudice that it visited upon his admiring friends a kind of vicarious punishment for the crime of cherishing and exhibiting anything like feelings of regard and sympathy in his behalf.

Petitions and memorials were sent to the legislature demanding legislation against such arbitrary proceedings, and that protection which could not be obtained from the managers of the roads or from the judicial tribunals. These were referred to a committee before whom there was a public hearing. The committee was addressed by Wendell Phillips, Mr. Remond, and Ellis Gray Loring. A bill was reported by Seth Sprague, Jr.; but interest and prejudice bore sway, and it failed to pass the Senate. The outrages continuing, similar petitions were presented at the next session, and a bill was reported to the House; but it failed of enactment, being indefinitely postponed by a majority of more than one hundred. Mr. Adams, a member of the committee that reported the bill, admitted the legality, but doubted the expediency, of such a law. There were but two railroads that made the obnoxious regulations which he thought should be at once abandoned. He doubted whether the time had come for a general law, and advised waiting to see if the point could not be gained without legislation.

The managers of these corporations, seeing the determined purpose of the friends of freedom and the temper of the

legislature, adopted Mr. Adams's advice, and gave up their arbitrary discriminations and tyrannical regulations. So another victory was won, and another of the hateful relics of the slave system, that once disgraced the land of the Pilgrims, was removed.

Many of the large towns and cities in Massachusetts demanded separation between black and white pupils in the schools and seminaries of learning. Even the common schools, sustained by law, to whose benefits all were entitled without distinction of color, did not escape the hateful discrimination. Though all were equally taxed for their support, yet all could not alike partake of the privileges they afforded. To put the brand of inferiority upon innocent and unoffending childhood, to lay upon it unnecessary as well as unrighteous burdens as it started on the journey of life, found by its oppressors, with all the advantages of birth, position, and superior culture, at best, hard and harsh enough, was as really disgraceful as it was unchristian.

Many saw the gross injustice and undeserved opprobrium involved in such discrimination, and its manifest tendency to perpetuate the existence and evils of caste in communities where such a policy was adopted. Protests in various forms were entered against it. In the city of Salem there sprang up a sharp controversy. Stephen C. Phillips, its mayor, maintained the right of the colored children to the full and complete benefit of the common schools. And it was chiefly through his influence that a legal opinion was obtained from Richard Fletcher, one of the most eminent and conscientious lawyers of the State, in which he maintained that these schools were contrary to the constitution of the Commonwealth.

In Nantucket, too, the same matter became the subject of an excited controversy. It was brought before the town in 1844, by the report of the school committee recommending that no discrimination should be made between the children of the two races. The report was not, however, sustained, but was indefinitely postponed. A resolution was carried in town meeting that colored children should be instructed by themselves, if deemed practicable by the school committee. A

portion, however, of the citizens, aggrieved by this decision, held a public meeting, largely attended by many of the most enlightened of its inhabitants, and presided over by John H. Shaw. They protested against the action of the town as unchristian, as a flagrant violation of the State constitution and of the laws of the Commonwealth, and as imposing an additional tax upon the people. They invoked the friends of law and order, morality and religion, freedom and equality, to act in defence of the just claims of their colored population.

In 1845 petitions were presented to the legislature in favor of legislation. They were referred to the Committee on Education, hearings were had, and a bill was reported to the Senate by Mr. Barrett of Hampshire, providing that any child unlawfully excluded from the public schools should be entitled to recover damages in the courts of the Commonwealth. Coming up for consideration on the 18th of February, it was rejected.

The next day Mr. Wilson moved a reconsideration of the vote by which it was rejected. He expressed his regret at the failure of the bill, which he represented as the most important that had come up during the session. "It concerned," he said, "the rights and feelings of a large but humble portion of our people, whose interests should be watched over and cared for by the legislature, whose imperative duty it was, when complaints were made of the invasion of the rights of the poorest and humblest, to provide a remedy that should be full and ample to secure and guard all his rights." He said the common-school system, the pride and glory of Massachusetts, was based upon the principle of perfect equality, and that the distinction set up at Nantucket aimed a blow at its very existence. The colored people felt, and rightly, that their feelings were trifled with and their rights disregarded. Denouncing the spirit that excluded colored children from the full and equal benefits of the common schools, he said: "It is the same which has drenched the world with blood for six thousand years, made a slaveholder in South Carolina and a slave-pirate on the coast of Africa." He said that those whose rights he wished to guard and secure had but little



influence or power ; while those who opposed them had both, and were only too willing to use them for their own aggrandizement. It was more popular to keep along with the current of prejudice than by resisting it to be denounced "a Radical or Abolitionist." "In retiring from the legislature," he said, "I am sustained by the consciousness that I have never uttered a word or given a vote against the rights of any human being. I had far rather have the warm and generous thanks of one poor orphan boy down on the island of Nantucket, that I may never see, nor even know, than to have the approbation of every man in the Commonwealth, whether in this chamber or out of it, who would deny to any child the full and equal benefits of our public schools."

Mr. Adams of Suffolk thought, if white children left the common school because colored children were admitted, the sooner they went the better. Such distinctions in the common schools sanctioned an aristocracy which he did not acknowledge.

There were several senators, however, who advocated the exclusive policy. Mr. Livermore of Middlesex County avowed his opposition to the proposed legislation. Referring to some remonstrants from Nantucket, he said they had fairly shown that no real injury was inflicted. If the colored children were excluded from the High School of Nantucket, "it was not on account of their color, but of their capacity." "I dislike," he said, "the philanthropic hobby-horses, and am not disposed to mount any of them." Mr. Clifford of Bristol, afterward attorney-general and governor, warmly eulogized the people and schools of Nantucket, and denied that the colored children there were deprived of their privileges. He would not sacrifice, he said, the larger class for the benefit of the smaller. Mr. Park of Suffolk traced the history and establishment of the Smith School in Boston. Referring to the objection of the greater distance some colored children must walk by this arrangement, he said : "Boys in the country have frequently to walk miles through the snows of winter to attend the district school." Mr. Stone of Worcester County opposed any action. If the bill passed, he said, "interest

in the public schools would be lost, and less money would be raised. By driving the colored children in, they will drive the white children out." Mr. Lawrence of Hampshire said if they could legislate to the last moment of time they could not change or remedy the difficulty complained of. "The Ethiopian," he said, "cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spot; neither can the white man change his tastes, nor his prejudices against the colored race. I do not justify it; I deplore it. But it exists, and we cannot change it."

After an earnest debate, Mr. Wilson's motion was adopted by a large majority, and the bill was then committed to the judiciary committee. That committee reported a bill in accordance with the prayer of the petitioners, which passed and became the law of the Commonwealth.

A few weeks after the passage of the act a petition was presented to the school committee of Boston, from the colored citizens, praying that "separate schools for colored children should be abolished, and that said children be permitted to attend the schools in their several districts." Vigorous efforts were made by Dr. Henry I. Bowditch, in which he was earnestly supported by Albert J. Wright and Dr. Charles A. Phelps. But the prayer of the petitioners was rejected by a vote of twelve to forty-five. The spirit of caste still lingered in portions of the Commonwealth, and legislation so just and equitable could not then be secured.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### POSITION OF THE COLORED PEOPLE. — FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

Sentiments of the Colored People. — Diverse Influences of Slavery and Freedom. — Childhood of Frederick Douglass. — Cruelties of Slavery illustrated. — Attempts to escape. — Sent to Baltimore. — Became a Ship-caulker. — Escaped to New York. — Introduced to Mr. Ruggles. — Arrived at New Bedford. — Works in a Ship-yard. — Addresses an Antislavery Convention in Nantucket. — Impressions made upon Garrison and Rogers. — Becomes Agent of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society. — Wonderful Effects of his Speeches. — His Devotion to the Cause of his Race. — Publishes his Autobiography. — Visits England. — Reasons for going. — Establishes the "North Star." — Immense Labors of Twenty Years.

WHILE the free colored people instinctively distrusted the Colonization Society, and withheld their confidence from it, they at once and heartily accepted the abolition movement. This was especially true of the more intelligent and well-informed. Among the colored ministers there were several who, seeing its religious as well as humane bearings, rendered essential aid to the cause. A few others did something in the same direction, arousing public attention and quickening the zeal of the friends of freedom.

But in 1841 a champion arose in the person of Frederick Douglass, who was destined to play an important part in the great drama then in progress. In him not only did the colored race but manhood itself find a worthy representative and advocate; one who was a signal illustration, not only of self-culture and success under the most adverse circumstances, but of the fact that talent and genius are "color-blind," and above the accidents of complexion and birth. He, too, furnished an example of the terrible necessities of slavery, and its purpose and power to crush out the human soul; as also of the benign energies of freedom to arouse, to develop, and enlarge its high-



est and noblest faculties, — the one aiming, and almost succeeding in the attempt, to make him a mere mindless and purposeless chattel; the other actually and indissolubly linking his name and labors with the antislavery cause, both in this country and in Europe. As few of the world's great men have ever had so checkered and diversified a career, so it may be at least plausibly claimed that no man represents in himself more conflicting ideas and interests. His life is in itself an epic which finds few to equal it in the realms of either romance or reality.

Frederick Douglass was born on the Eastern Shore, Maryland, about the year 1817. According to the necessities of slavery and the usual practice of slave-masters, he was taken from his mother when an infant, consequently deprived of even the rude care which maternal instinct might have prompted, and placed under the guardianship of his grandmother, with whom he lived until he was seven years of age. At the age of ten he was sent to Baltimore, to be the companion and protector of the son of a young married couple, who, in consequence of general refinement of character and his proposed relation to their darling boy, treated him, at first, kindly. This change Mr. Douglass ever regarded as a providential interposition, — as the turning-point where his pathway, leaving the descending grade of slave life, entered upon that which led him in that widely divergent and upward direction it has since pursued. Leaving the rude experience of the plantation, with the barren and desert-like surroundings of the Eastern Shore, for the bustle and necessary companionship of the city, an opportunity of learning to read was afforded him, which he most sedulously and successfully, though surreptitiously, improved. But the friendliness which his master and mistress had so generously extended to him as an ignorant slave, they felt obliged, by the necessities of the system, to withhold from him now that he could read, and had learned to question the rightfulness of slavery and to chafe under its chains.

Returned to the Eastern Shore, he encountered the rigors of plantation life, greatly increased by the drunken caprices of an intemperate master, and doubtless aggravated by his own impatient and contumacious rebellings under such slave-

holding restraint. This, however, was but a prelude to an experience graver and still more tragic. Despairing of controlling young Douglass himself, his owner placed him — as men place their unbroken colts under the care of horse-trainers — in the hands of a professed negro-breaker, known through the region as a cruel and merciless man, who had not only gained that reputation, but found it necessary or for his interest to maintain it. Concerning this change Mr. Douglass remarks, after referring to the “comparative tenderness” with which he had been treated at Baltimore: “I was now about to sound profounder depths in slave life. The rigors of a field less tolerable than the field of battle were before me.” That his apprehensions were not groundless these extracts, taken from his autobiography, abundantly show: “I had not been in his possession three whole days before he subjected me to a most brutal chastisement. Under his heavy blows blood flowed freely; the wales were left on my back as large as my little finger. The sores on my back from this whipping continued for weeks.” “I remained with Mr. Corey one year, cannot say I lived with him, and during the first six months that I was there I was whipped either with sticks or cowskins every week. Aching bones and a sore back were my constant companions. Frequently as the lash was used, however, Mr. Corey thought less of it, as a means of breaking down my spirit, than of hard and long-continued labor. He worked me steadily up to the point of my powers of endurance. From the dawn of day in the morning till the darkness was complete in the evening, I was kept at hard work in the field or the woods.”

He gave accounts of individual cases of brutal chastisement which were revolting almost beyond conception; while his concise description of himself “as a living embodiment of mental and physical wretchedness” seems but a natural result. “A few months of discipline,” he says, “tamed me. Mr. Corey succeeded in breaking me. I was broken in body, soul, and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed; my intellect languished; the disposition to read departed; the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute.”

Having completed his year with Corey, he was hired out to another and more humane master. But the iron of slavery rankled in his soul, and he could not endure its galling restraints, however softened by kindness. After long rumination upon the subject, and conferences with four or five of his companions in bondage, he proposed and planned an attempt to escape. Betrayed, however, by a confederate, they were prevented from carrying their attempt into execution, and were arrested and imprisoned. Instead of being "sold South" — that dreaded alternative of success, which held back thousands from making the attempt — he was sent again to Baltimore. Being nearly murdered by the carpenters of a ship-yard, because of their jealousy of slave competition with white labor, — a crime for which no indictment could be found, though sought, because no white witnesses would testify against his brutal assailants, — he was sent to another yard to learn the trade of a calker. Becoming an expert workman, he was permitted to make his own contracts, returning his week's wages every Saturday night to his master. At the same time — which was of more importance to him — he was permitted to associate with some free colored men, who had formed a kind of lyceum for their mutual improvement, and by means of which he was enabled to increase materially his knowledge and mental culture. All of this, however, did but increase his sense of the essential injustice of slavery, and make him more restive under its galling chains. Accordingly he made his plans, now successful, and on the third day of September, 1838, he says, "I bade farewell to the city of Baltimore, and to that slavery which had been my abhorrence from childhood." For prudential reasons the particulars of his mode of escape were withheld from the public knowledge, as they were of little comparative importance; while, had they been known then, they might have compromised some and hedged up the way of escape of others.

Landing in New York, a homeless, penniless, and friendless fugitive, he thus describes his feelings: "In the midst of thousands of my fellow-men, and yet a perfect stranger! In the midst of human brothers, and yet more fearful of them than of hungry wolves! I was without home, without friends,



without work, without money, and without any definite knowledge of which way to go or where to look for succor." In the midst of his perplexities he met a sailor, whose seeming frankness and honesty won, as they deserved, his confidence. He introduced him to David Ruggles, chairman of the Vigilance Committee, a colored gentleman of much intelligence, energy, and worth, who by his position and executive ability did much for his people. This gentleman advised him to go to New Bedford, Massachusetts, assisted him in reaching that city, and introduced him to trustworthy friends there. Here he was employed, mostly as a day laborer on the wharves, encountering the same shameful and unmanly jealousy of colored competition that had nearly cost him his life at Baltimore, and which would not allow him to work at his trade as calker by the side of white men. Being a professing Christian, he was interested in religious meetings, where he was accustomed to pray and exhort, a practice which probably had something to do with his wonderful subsequent success as a public speaker.

The first demonstration of his eloquence which attracted public attention was at a meeting mainly of colored people, in which were specially considered the claims of the Colonization Society. Here began to be emitted specimens of that fiery eloquence from his capacious soul, burning with the indignant and unfading memories of the wrongs, outrages, and the deep injustice which slavery had inflicted on him, and which it was now inflicting upon his brethren in bonds. Of course, the few white Abolitionists of New Bedford were not long in finding out the young fugitive, appreciating his gifts and promise of usefulness, and in devising ways of extending his range of effort for their unpopular cause. Attending an antislavery convention at Nantucket, he was persuaded to address the meeting. His speech here seems to have been singularly eloquent and effective. Among those present was Mr. Garrison, who bore his testimony, both then and afterward, to "the extraordinary emotion it exerted on his own mind, and to the powerful impression it exerted upon a crowded auditory." He declared, too, that "Patrick Henry had never made a more

eloquent speech in the cause of liberty than the one they had just listened to from the lips of that hunted fugitive." Nathaniel P. Rogers, editor of the "Herald of Freedom," thus characterized a speech made by him the same year. After speaking of his "commanding figure and heroic port," his head, that "would strike a phrenologist amid a sea of them in Exeter Hall," he adds: "As a speaker he has few equals. It is not declamation, but oratory, power of debate. . . . He has wit, argument, sarcasm, pathos, all that first-rate men show in their master efforts."

This language, especially that of Mr. Garrison, seems extravagant, and the laudation excessive; nor could it be accepted as a general and critical estimate of Mr. Douglass as an orator, great as his powers confessedly were and are. His Nantucket speech was unquestionably one of those rare bursts of eloquence, little less than inspiration itself, which are sometimes vouchsafed to a man in his happiest moods; when the speaker seems to rise above himself and to take his audience with him. Besides, there was certainly much in the circumstances and surroundings of that meeting to impress the minds and stir the sensibilities of such an assembly. On that isle of the sea, at some distance from the mainland, one could easily imagine a picture of the nation overshadowed by the dark cloud of slavery, and prostrate beneath a despotism pressing alike on the slaves at the South and on their advocates at the North. Indeed, the latter had just passed through a baptism of fire and blood, during those fearful years of mobs and martyrdom, which had measurably ceased, but had been succeeded by what the earnest Abolitionist deprecated more than violence, and that was the general apathy which then reigned.

In the conflict for freedom of speech and the right of free discussion Abolitionists had achieved a victory. What they had contended for had, at length, been conceded; at least, the principle was no longer contested. They had conquered a peace; but their opponents were determined it should be the peace of the grave. For the wordy warfare of discussion and the brutal violence of lynch laws they would substitute the

policy of neglect. To let them severely alone, to belittle their cause, to pass them by with a supercilious sneer, and to frown contemptuously upon their attempts to gain a hearing, became at that time the tactics of the enemies against the advocates of human rights. Of course, what were termed antislavery measures had lost much of their zest and potency; meetings became less numerous attended, and, consequently, less frequent; organizations, losing their interest and effectiveness, began to die out. Something was necessary to revive and reanimate the drooping spirits and the languid movements of the cause and its friends. It was then, at this opportune moment, while they were thus enveloped in the chill and shade of this most uncomfortable and unsatisfactory state of affairs, the young fugitive appeared upon the stage. He seemed like a messenger from the dark land of slavery itself; as if in his person his race had found a fitting advocate; as if through his lips their long pent-up wrongs and wishes had found a voice. No wonder that Nantucket meeting was greatly moved. It would not be strange if the words of description and comment of those present and in full sympathy with the youthful orator should be somewhat extravagant.

The Massachusetts Antislavery Society at once made overtures to Mr. Douglass, and he became one of its accredited agents. For this new field of labor, which he reluctantly and hesitatingly entered, and for which he modestly said he "had no preparation," the event proved that he was admirably fitted. In addition to that inborn genius and those natural gifts of oratory with which he was so generously endowed, he had the long and terrible lessons which slavery had burned into his soul. The knowledge, too, which he had stolen in the house of bondage, had enabled him to read the "Liberator" from week to week, as he was engaged in his hard and humble labors on the wharves of New Bedford, and thus to become acquainted with the new thoughts and reasonings of others. Doubtless many things which had long lain in his own mind formless and vague he found there more clearly defined and more logically expressed; while the fierceness and force of its utterances tallied only too well with the all-consuming zeal



of his own soul. Thus fitted and commissioned he entered upon the great work of his life. Though distrustful of his abilities, no knight-errant ever sallied forth with higher resolve, or bore himself with more heroic courage. With whatever diffidence he undertook the proposed service, there was no lack of earnestness and devotion. Nor was his range a limited one. Fitted by his talents to move thousands on the platform, he was prepared by his early experience to be equally persuasive in a little meeting in a country school-house. In hall or church or grove he was alike effective. He could make himself at home in the parlors of the great or by the firesides of the humble. He could ride in the public conveyances from State to State, or tramp on foot from neighborhood to neighborhood. Fertile in expedients and patient in endeavor, he was not easily balked or driven from his purpose. In the midst of the prejudices of caste, hardly less strong and cruel in Massachusetts than in Maryland, he never permitted these, however painful, to divert him from his purpose. If he could not ride inside the stage, he would ride outside; if he could not ride in the first-class car, he rode in the second-class; if he could not occupy the cabin of the steamer, he went into the steerage; but to these insults to his manhood he generally interposed his earnest protest, and often only yielded to superior force.

The character, culture, and eloquence displayed by his addresses provoked the insinuation that he was an impostor, and that he had never been a slave. To silence this imputation, he prepared and published, in the spring of 1845, an autobiography, which was widely circulated. As in it he gave the names of persons, places, and dates, by which his claims and statements could be verified, it was soon known in Maryland, and he and his friends were given to understand that efforts would be made for his recapture. To place himself out of the reach of his pursuers, and, at the same time, help forward his great work, it was proposed that he should visit England. He was very kindly received there, and visited nearly all the large towns and cities of the kingdom. In a lecture in Finsbury's Chapel, in London, to an audience of three thousand,

he thus answered the question why he did not confine his labors to the United States.

“ My first answer is, because slavery is the common enemy of mankind, and that all mankind should be made acquainted with its abominable character. My second answer is, that the slave is a man, and as such is entitled to your sympathy as a man and a brother. He has been the prey, the common prey, of Christendom during the last three hundred years ; and it is but right, just, and proper that his wrongs should be known throughout the world. I have another reason for bringing this matter before the British public, and it is this : slavery is a system of wrong so blinding to all around it, so hardening to the heart, so corrupting to the morals, so deleterious to religion, so sapping to all the principles of justice in its immediate vicinity, that the community thus connected with it lack the moral power necessary to its removal. It is a system of such gigantic evil, so strong, so overwhelming in its power, that no one nation is equal to its removal. It requires the humanity of Christianity, the morality of the civilized world, to remove it. Hence I call upon the people of Britain to look at this matter, and to exert the influence I am about to show they possess for the removal of slavery from America. I can appeal to them as strongly by their regard for the slaveholder as by their regard for the slave to labor in this cause. There is nothing said here against slavery that will not be recorded in the United States. I am here, also, because the slaveholders do not want me to be here. I have adopted the maxim laid down by Napoleon, never to occupy ground which the enemy would like me to occupy. The slaveholders would much rather have me, if I will denounce slavery, denounce it in the Northern States, where their friends and supporters are, who will stand by them and mob me for denouncing it. . . . The power I exert here is something like the power that is exerted by the man at the end of the lever ; my influence now is just in proportion to my distance from the United States.”

In the same speech, referring to the barbarous laws of the slave code, denying that he was inveighing against the

institutions of America, and asserting that his only purpose was to strip this anomalous system of all concealment, he said: "To tear off the mask from this abominable system; to expose it to the light of heaven, ay, to the heat of the sun, that it may burn and wither it out of existence, — is my object in coming to this country. I want the slaveholder surrounded as by a wall of antislavery fire, so that he may see the condemnation of himself and his system glaring down in letters of light. I want him to feel that he has no sympathy in England, Scotland, or Ireland; that he has none in Canada, none in Mexico, none among the poor wild Indians; that the voice of the civilized, ay, the savage world is against him. I would have condemnation blaze down upon him in every direction, till, stunned and overwhelmed with shame and confusion, he is compelled to let go the grasp he holds upon the persons of his victims and restore them to their long-lost rights."

That, like other prominent Abolitionists of those days, he overrated the power of truth, and underestimated the power of slavery and its tenacity of life, appears in the same speech, and in this connection, when he says: "I expose slavery in this country because to expose it is to kill it. Slavery is one of those monsters of darkness to whom the light of truth is death. Expose slavery, and it dies. Light is to slavery what the heat of the sun is to the root of a tree; it must die under it." Mr. Douglass had not to live long—his own career furnishing the most convincing evidence of the fact—to see that something more than "light" was necessary to destroy slavery. To expose it was not to kill it.

Of this, too, he received substantial evidence in England and Scotland, especially the latter; in England, by the refusal of the Evangelical Alliance, at the instance of the American delegation, to exclude the representatives of slaveholding churches from its platform; in Scotland, where he found the Free Church not only receiving contributions for its church-building fund from such churches, but sturdily defending its propriety by the voice of its prince of scholars and clergymen, Dr. Chalmers, and by that of its hardly less honored leaders, Dr. Cunningham and Dr. Candlish. And this latter was done



in spite of the earnest remonstrances of himself and others, among them that most eloquent Englishman, George Thompson, urging them not to receive that "price of blood," but to "send back the money."

Mr. Douglass remained in Great Britain nearly two years; in which time he visited England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, everywhere pressing upon the public mind the evils of slavery and the duty of laboring for its overthrow. He was cordially received, and treated with the utmost consideration. His friends, without solicitation from him, raised one hundred and fifty pounds for his manumission, and twenty-five hundred dollars with which to establish a press in this country, which he subsequently did, at Rochester, New York. His journal was first called the "North Star," and afterward "Frederick Douglass's Paper," and was ably conducted and well sustained till after the abolition of slavery. Thus by voice, pen, and personal influence has he contributed in no small measure to those manifold labors which the last thirty years have witnessed for the removal of slavery, and for the rehabilitation of his race with those rights of which it had so long been despoiled, and for the still higher purpose of preparing it for the new position it now occupies.

The main interest and importance, however, of Mr. Douglass's career, are public, rather than personal. Full of thrilling adventure, striking contrasts, brilliant passages, and undoubted usefulness, as his history was, his providential relations to some of the most marked facts and features of American history constitute the chief elements of that interest and importance which by common consent belong to it. Lifting the curtain, it revealed with startling vividness and effect the inner experience and the workings of slavery, not only upon its victims, but upon all connected with it. In it, as in a mirror, are seen how unnatural, how inhuman, and how wicked were its demands. Torn from his mother's arms in infancy, he was treated with the same disregard of his comfort and the promptings of nature as were the domestic animals of the farm-yard. As he was transferred from one master to another, every one can see what the hazards of a "chattel personal" were, and

how the kindness of one only aggravated the harshness of another. In the extreme solicitude manifested by his kind master and mistress at Baltimore that he should not learn to read, and their marked displeasure and change of treatment when he had thus learned, are seen not only the stern necessities of slavery, but how it quenched the kindlier feelings and turned to bitterness even affection itself. In the terrible struggle with Corey which he so graphically describes, when "the dark night of slavery shut in upon him," and he was "transformed to a brute," is disclosed something of the process by which manhood was dethroned, and an immortal being was transformed by something more than legal phrase into a chattel,—a thing. Had he, after his first unsuccessful attempt to escape, been "sold South," as he had reason to apprehend, and had not been sent north to Baltimore, that night would have remained unbroken, and that transformation would have been complete; and the world now knows what a light would have been extinguished and what a sacrifice would have been made. He escaped, indeed; but how many did not? Not all were so richly endowed, though none can tell how many "village Hampdens," how many "mute, inglorious Miltons" have thus been lost to letters and to man; while many have learned to sympathize with Dr. Campbell, at Finsbury's Chapel, when he exclaimed: "My blood boiled within me when I heard his address to-night, and thought that he had left behind him three millions of such men."

And sadder still when it is seen that all this was done, if not in the name of the Christian religion, in spite of it, by those professing its holy faith,—his owner, and tormentor, Corey, both being members of the church; the latter punctilious and pretentious in his church-going, praying, and psalm-singing, adding the latter generally to his daily family worship,—and saddest of all, that, when Mr. Douglass, rescued as from the lion's den, bore a testimony which could not be gainsaid, the multitudes, though fascinated by his thrilling story and matchless eloquence, withheld from him what he earnestly sought, while only the few were willing to receive the unpopular doctrines of his Abolitionism. For twenty years he

labored as few others could, addressing thousands upon thousands in the New England, Middle, and Western States; and yet till the beginning of the Rebellion he belonged to a despised minority, while the system that had so outraged him and his people still dominated the State, and was sanctioned, if not sanctified, by the Church. In the light of such a history this mountain of national guilt assumes more towering proportions, and its base is seen to rest not upon the South alone, but upon the whole land. The crime was gigantic; and, though its expiation has already been terrible, who shall say that it has been commensurate with the crime itself?

Few have forgotten the closing utterances of Mr. Lincoln's second Inaugural concerning the war still raging, sounding as if they fell from the judgment-seat and were the words of doom itself: "Yet, if God will that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondmen's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so it still must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

The solemn significance of this language is still worthy of thought, though the war has ceased and the great armies then in the field have been recalled.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE FLORIDA WAR, — SLAVERY ITS CAUSE.

The Surrender of Slaves by the Seminoles demanded. — The Additional Treaty. — Agreement to remove to the West. — Outrages perpetrated by Slave-traders. — Exasperation of the Indians. — Stern Policy of President Jackson. — Seizure of Osceola's Wife. — Death of the Indian Agent. — Destruction of Major Dade's Command. — Conduct of the Citizens of Florida. — Recall of General Scott. — Action of General Jessup. — Treaty of Peace ; rejected by the Government. — The Slave-hunters. — Admissions of General Jessup. — Bounty offered to the Creeks. — Dishonorable Conduct of Army Officers. — Honorable Action of the Cherokee Delegation. — Cruel Action of the War Department. — Violation of Flags of Truce. — Noble Conduct of General Taylor. — Treaty with the Creeks and Seminoles. — Danger of the Exiles. — Demands of the Creeks. — The Exiles emigrate to Mexico. — The Faith and Honor of the Nation tarnished.

THE citizens of Florida and the adjoining States continued to make demands upon the Seminoles for the surrender of negroes residing among them. Unscrupulous adventurers, too, entered that territory, and in violation of treaty stipulations, of law, justice, and humanity, sought to re-enslave not only those who had escaped from their masters since the close of the war, but the exiles and their children. The Indians were incensed by these claims and this lawless violence, and it became apparent that peace could not be long maintained.

By treaty it had been provided that several of the Seminole chiefs should visit the reservation occupied by the Creeks west of the Mississippi. It was intended, if the Seminoles were satisfied with the country and such prospective arrangements as might be made, that they should be removed and become an integral portion of the Creek nation. Whether or not it was the intention of President Jackson by this arrangement to enable the Creeks to enslave the exiles, that would certainly have been the practical effect of this proposed removal.

Of course, as that purpose became known, the exiles were alarmed and the Seminoles became suspicious. Being pressed, too, by the commissioners, the chiefs, though unauthorized by their nation, entered, in 1833, into what was termed the "additional treaty," by which a tract of land was secured for the use of the Seminoles forever. When the chiefs returned to Florida they desired a meeting of the head men of the nation to whom they might make report of the results of their visit. But the Indian agent peremptorily refused to have such a meeting called, and demanded that immediate preparations should be made for removal.

The citizens of Florida also presented a protest to the President against allowing the Indians to remain longer in the Territory. They alleged that the Seminoles did not recapture fugitive slaves; and that unless they did, no slave property would be safe. Although the treaty had not been ratified by the Seminoles, and it was known that they were nearly unanimous in their opposition to it, President Jackson indorsed on the back of this protest an order to the Secretary of War "to inquire into the alleged facts, and if proved to be true, to direct the Seminoles to prepare to remove West and join the Creeks." In assuming this responsibility the President was consistent with his usual policy wherever the demands of slavery were involved. Notwithstanding his traditional personal courage and independence of character, he, either from sympathy with the spirit and purposes of the Slave Power, or from fear of its displeasure, ever showed himself forward, not to say unscrupulous, in any service it required.

By the treaty of Indian Spring two hundred and fifty thousand dollars had been reserved to pay the slaveholders of Georgia for slaves lost prior to 1812. These claims had been audited, and one hundred and nine thousand dollars had been paid, leaving one hundred and forty-one thousand dollars, which justly belonged to the Creeks. These slave claimants, with a grasping cupidity which bespoke its origin, made a new claim for this unexpended balance. Nor did an obsequious Congress refuse to allow the singular claim "for the loss of the offspring which the exiles would have borne to their mas-

ters had they remained in bondage." Having paid the slaveholders of Georgia this enormous sum, the Creeks claimed that the exiles became their slaves, and demanded of the Seminoles that they should be surrendered. While, on the one hand, the Creeks were claiming the exiles as slaves, the President, on the other, was requiring that the Seminoles and exiles should be sent to the Indian reservation in the West, where the former would have the power to enforce their demands.

By the treaty of Camp Moultrie certain Seminole chiefs, having slaves with whom the exiles had intermarried, were authorized to name certain persons who should reside among them and who should be responsible for their conduct, while the United States were to be responsible for the safety of the agents thus employed. One of these chiefs held about twenty slaves, and there resided on his land several exiles who had never been slaves. Slave-dealers in Georgia desiring to get both the slaves and exiles into their possession, one of their number claimed to have purchased several of a Creek. This claim, having been pronounced fraudulent and void by the judge of the District Court, was sold to other traders more daring and reckless than himself. They provided themselves with fetters and bloodhounds, descended the river, and landed on the reservation. Finding that the negroes were prepared to defend themselves they retired, and with cowardly and mendacious effrontery raised the cry that the Indian chief had armed his slaves and was about to make war. A military force was sent to the reservation; and, although the chief had explained to the officer that his people had taken arms only against those who had come to rob them of their liberties, their weapons and ammunition were taken from them. The next day the slave-traders returned, seized the slaves and exiles, manacled them, carried them to Georgia, and sold them into bondage. The chief petitioned Congress for redress, but could obtain none either for his own or his people's wrongs. Power was on the side of the oppressor, and not on that of his victim.

Another chief had upon his plantation slaves and exiles.



The slave-stealers came and carried away both bond and free. Knowing that a band of slave-stealers was watching his plantation, another chief armed his people, and when the marauders came they fired upon and drove them away. He then propounded to the Indian agent this pertinent inquiry: "Are the free negroes and the negroes belonging to this town to be stolen in face of law and justice, carried off, and sold to fill the pockets of those who are worse than land pirates?" and he demanded protection according to treaty stipulations, but none was afforded. The slave-stealers returned, seized their victims, carried them to Alabama, and sold them into perpetual slavery.

These lawless deeds exasperated the Indians and alarmed the negroes. If the exiles remained in Florida, they saw that they were to be reduced to slavery by violence; if they removed to the West, they feared that they would be enslaved by the Creeks. Mr. Thompson, Indian agent; General Clinch, who had twenty years before commanded the troops at the Fort Blunt massacre; Governor Eaton, late Secretary of War; and other officials, — represented to the government the wrongs of these people in Florida, and the probabilities that they would be enslaved by the Creeks if sent to the West. But the administration was not to be moved from its purpose. General Cass, then Secretary of War, characterized appeals made in behalf of the Seminoles and negroes as "the promptings of a false philanthropy." He persisted in the demand that they should go to the West, join the Creeks, and subject themselves to their authority.

Intent on getting these negroes into their possession, the slave-traders applied for admission to enter Florida for the purpose of purchasing slaves of the Indians. This application was referred to Mr. Grundy, Attorney-General, who reported that he saw "no good reason why the white people should not be permitted to purchase slaves of the Indians." President Jackson gave the permission asked for. The Indian agent, knowing that the Indians, when in a state of intoxication, would give bills of sale of negroes pointed out to them, whether owning them or not, and that the policy would be most disas-

trous, remonstrated against it. So great, indeed, was the indignation excited against this infamous order, that it was soon countermanded. But these acts of violence, this constant pressure upon them to go to the West, unite with the Creeks, and become subject to their authority, alarmed both Indians and negroes, and they resolved to defend themselves.

At that time the number of slaves held by the Seminoles was estimated at two hundred, and the exiles and free negroes at six times that number. Many of the latter had intermarried with the Indians. Osceola, a young chief, had married the daughter of another chief, whose wife had been one of these exiles. This young chief with his wife visited Fort King for trading purposes. While there his wife was seized as a slave and carried off into hopeless bondage. Frantic at this cruel wrong, Osceola himself was seized, manacled, and put in prison, where he remained for six days. Vowing vengeance on those who had committed this outrage, he lay for weeks with his followers near Fort King, keeping watch upon the movements of the agent. Mr. Thompson and Lieutenant Smith were walking some distance from the fort, when he was fired upon by Osceola and his party, and Thompson fell, pierced with fourteen balls. The few soldiers at Fort King were in no condition to follow them, and Osceola hastened to join his companions.

In November General Clinch ordered Major Dade, then near Tampa Bay, to prepare for a march to Fort King, about one hundred and thirty miles distant. As his march would be through an unsettled forest, with swamp and lake and hommock, he obtained for a guide Lewis, slave of Antonio Pacheco, who spoke and wrote with facility the English, French, and Spanish languages, and also the Indian dialect. Knowing the persecutions and outrages inflicted upon his race, he determined to embrace this opportunity to avenge their wrongs. He communicated to the Indians and exiles the information that Major Dade was to go to Fort King, that he was to act as guide, and that he would conduct them near the great Wahoo swamp. Hostilities had commenced, and the Indians and exiles had gathered near the designated place. The memories

of past wrongs and the fear of impending evils gave them a purpose and courage to strike a blow for safety and revenge. Entering the defile into which he and his hundred and ten men had been lured, Major Dade was fired upon, and himself and more than half of his command were killed at the first discharge. Only two soldiers escaped. The murder of the Indian agent and the massacre of Dade's command, both on the 28th of December, 1835, inaugurated a war, which proved to be costly in both blood and treasure. But the Indians and exiles had been forced into it by the sordid and all-grasping avarice, the hatred and contempt of the slave-hunters of Florida and the adjacent States.

The people of Florida, assuming that the war was fought in their interest, attempted to interfere and to dictate the policy and movements of General Scott. Refusing to yield to this dictation, he was bitterly assailed and his removal was demanded. Influenced by these feelings, and perhaps by his own desire for power, General Jessup wrote to Francis P. Blair, sharply criticising General Scott's policy. This letter was placed in the hands of President Jackson, who immediately ordered General Scott to report at Washington, and placed General Jessup in command. But that officer found that he had entered upon a struggle, to be stubbornly contested, with red men fighting for their homes and black men fighting for their freedom.

Early in the spring of 1837 a conference was held with some of the Indian chiefs. With a magnanimity and self-abnegation in strange contrast with the sordid and unfeeling policy of the government and of those whose cause it championed, they refused to enter into any arrangements that did not guarantee to the exiles equal protection with themselves. Hostilities had then continued sixteen months, blood and treasure had been lavishly expended, and the question of giving the exiles equal protection with the Indians remained the chief obstacle in the way of peace. At length yielding to the pressing exigencies of the situation, General Jessup agreed, in behalf of the United States, that the Seminoles and their allies who would emigrate to the West should be



secured their lives, liberty, and property. Under this treaty the exiles secured that promise of protection for which they had so bravely battled. Abraham, perhaps the ablest man among them, entered upon the task of persuading them to remove to the West, where they would be free from their persecutors. A region of country ten miles square, near Tampa Bay, was marked out as a place of rendezvous for the Indians and negroes preparatory to their Western journey. Even Osceola avowed his purpose to emigrate. Twenty-six vessels were brought for their transportation. General Jessup announced that the war was ended, dismissed the volunteers, and asked leave to retire from active duty.

But this treaty, though it involved an enforced emigration of the Seminoles from their homes to an untried country, and that, too, against their wishes, contained too much of justice and humanity to be acceptable to the slaveholders of Florida, Georgia, and Alabama. Accordingly they addressed a communication to the Secretary of War, stating the fact that it contained no provision for indemnity or the restitution of negroes, and that unless the Indians were compelled to perform the stipulations of the treaty of Camp Moultrie, "owners may never regain their slaves."

In pursuance of this same settled purpose, slave-hunters desired permission to go among the Indians and negroes who were coming in preparatory to their emigration to the West, for the purpose of identifying and reclaiming fugitives. Their request was indeed refused, but for reasons of policy rather than of principle. "Any interference with the negroes," it was said, "will produce alarm on their part, and inevitably deprive us of all the advantages we have gained." Writing to Colonel Warren of the Florida militia, General Jessup affirmed that while there was no disposition among the Indians to renew hostilities, any attempt to interfere with their negroes would be followed by an instant resort to arms. In a general order of the 5th of April he declared that he had reason to believe the interference of unprincipled white men with "the negro property of the Seminoles would prevent their emigration and lead to a renewal of the war."

Pressed by the clamorous demands of the slave-jobbers, he made an arrangement, not with those with whom he had negotiated the treaty, but with Co-had-jo, an unimportant chief, who acted without authority, that the Indians should surrender the negroes of whites, particularly those who were taken during the war. Though this arrangement had no binding force upon the Indians, it created the greatest alarm, and General Jessup was forced soon after to admit that the premature attempts of the citizens of Florida to obtain possession of slaves had prevented the Indians from coming in, and also that it had caused many of those who had come in to leave the camp. But the legislature of Florida affirming the right of the masters to regain their slaves, and popular meetings resolving that the recapture of their slaves constituted an object hardly less important than the peace of the country, General Jessup modified his order, allowed citizens to enter a portion of the Territory, and, though he had repeatedly stated that any attempt to interfere with the negroes would defeat the treaty and cause an immediate resort to arms, he weakly consented, and allowed them to range the country in pursuit of slaves, and to use the army in that infamous work. On the 25th of May General Jessup wrote to Colonel Harvey: "If you see Osceola again, I wish you to tell him that I intend to send exploring parties into any part of the country during the summer, and I shall send out and take all the negroes that belong to the white people, and he must not allow Indians and Indian negroes to mingle with them. Tell him I am sending to Cuba for bloodhounds to trail them, and I intend to hang every one that don't come in." Whether this message was ever communicated to the Indian chieftain or not, the re-enslavement of those who had taken refuge with the Seminoles created great alarm. Blacks who had come in fled, though ninety of them, confined within the pickets of Tampa Bay, were immediately, on the 2d of June, sent to New Orleans. This act so alarmed the Indians, who had come in for the purpose of emigrating, that they fled into the interior, resolved to defend themselves. Two weeks after this, General Jessup wrote to General Gadsden that he had captured ninety negroes, the property of citi-

zens, and had sent them to St. Mark's and St. Augustine; and also that he had seized and sent off ninety Indian negroes to New Orleans, and held seventeen then. But his vigilant efforts in the service of the slaveholders and slave-catchers had defeated his treaty of peace, and, in the same letter, he wrote, "All is lost."

Hostilities were renewed. The guilt and dishonor rest on General Jessup. At least he was the instrument, though slavery was the inspiration. He had promised the Creeks the "plunder," understood by both parties to include slaves, they might capture. He now held out the same kind of inducement to the Florida militia. In a letter to Colonel Warren he promised that the negroes of the Indians should belong to the corps that captured them. Field officers were to have three shares, company officers two shares, and privates one share each. Documents published by the XXVth Congress reveal the dishonorable fact that the war, which had been renewed, was to be stimulated by the hope of sharing the profits or spoils of forays into the Indian country, including captured negroes. Even the Indians west of the Mississippi were thus appealed to, and the same disgraceful motives held out, and some of the Choctaws and Delawares actually entered the service of this great and magnanimous Christian nation, for the purpose of harrying and distressing this handful of Indians and negroes, with the pledge that negroes taken, instead of being held as prisoners of war, might be sold as their reward or the price of their service. And to make the thing more disgraceful still, on their expressing some discontent at the amount of pay realized, General Jessup sought to pacify them with an additional offer, though admitting that he had transcended his authority and the law in what he had already "stipulated." He, however, promised that he would pay them "fifty dollars for every negro" captured.

But the Cherokees, instead of furnishing slave-catchers, sent a delegation of twelve influential men, who bore to the Seminoles an address, written by John Ross, assuring them that they might confide in the justice and honor of the United States. This assurance of the Cherokee chief was undoubtedly made



in good faith, though, in view of the general course and policy of the government, it sounds like the bitterest irony. Indeed, Mr. Ross himself soon had occasion to expostulate with the officials for their breach of faith towards those who, yielding to his suggestions, had placed themselves within the power and reach of United States troops.

King Philip, an aged chief, was captured by General Hernandez of the Florida militia, with eleven others of his tribe. He sent a message to Wild Cat, his son, one of the most active of the Seminole chiefs, requesting a visit. As the Cherokee delegation had laid before them the assurance of John Ross that they could confide in the honor of the general government, it was determined that Wild Cat should visit his father and bear with him a peace token. Becoming thus a messenger to his people, he visited them, and, after the space of ten days, returned with the assurance that Osceola and about a hundred Indians and as many Indian negroes were on their way to St. Augustine for the purpose of negotiating peace. By direction of General Hernandez they encamped a few miles from that place, keeping the white flag flying. The General met them at their encampment for the purpose of escorting them into St. Augustine. But instead of doing so, as the Indians expected, he read to Osceola a paper from General Jessup asking these questions: "Are you prepared at once to deliver up the negroes taken from the citizens? Why have you not surrendered them already, as promised by Co-had-jo at Fort King? Have the chiefs of the nation acted in relation to the talk at Fort King?"

The Indian chief exhibited great emotion and astonishment at these questions. Turning to Co-had-jo, he said: "You must answer, I am choked." The Indians were instantly surrounded, disarmed, taken into St. Augustine, and imprisoned. The negroes were sent to Tampa Bay for safe keeping. Wild Cat, who had been innocently used as an instrument for the betrayal of Osceola and his friends, was also imprisoned, though after some weeks he succeeded in effecting his escape. A few weeks after Micanopy, regarded as one of the most important chiefs of the nation, through the influence of the Cherokee delegation,

which had come more than a thousand miles on their mission of peace, accompanied by a portion of that delegation, seventy-five Indians and forty exiles, bearing a flag of truce, came to General Jessup's camp. A few days after their arrival, they too were seized, disarmed, made prisoners of war, and sent to St. Augustine.

Readers of history must go far and peruse many volumes before they can find a parallel to these transactions, in which the principles of humanity, honesty, and fair dealing have been so completely ignored and trampled underfoot. When it is remembered that the Indian's only alleged fault in this controversy was his extension of the rites of hospitality to the trembling fugitive, and his unwillingness to rudely repel those who sought that hospitality from his door; that his was the pagan and his pursuers the professedly Christian nation,—can language be too strong that justly characterizes such conduct? Is it possible to exaggerate? Does Carthage alone deserve the unenviable distinction involved in its "Punic faith"? No wonder that the Cherokees remonstrated against this violation of the flag of truce. Nor should the wonder be less that their remonstrances were without avail. The poor boon of making an explanation to the deceived Seminoles, to assure them that they were not parties to the cruel fraud, though at first denied but finally permitted, can only be regarded as an exception to the usual course of violence, deception, and wrong. With good reason, though a most damaging reflection upon the government, the Cherokees returned to their homes, refusing to have further communication with men so oblivious of the commonest principles of honor and fair dealing.

The war went on, and General Jessup continued to employ the military power of the nation in seizing and returning fugitives. While the officers and soldiers of the United States army deemed the work odious and degrading, the Florida volunteers were adepts. Early in 1838 General Jessup made a campaign into the country, and had a skirmish with the Indians and their allies. He erected a stockade which he called Fort Jupiter, and, by the advice of his officers, sent a

proposition to the Indians to make peace on condition that they and their allies should remain in the southern portion of the Territory. His messenger, whom he designated as a "Seminole negro," returned accompanied by several Indians, who expressed a strong desire to remain in the Territory. On the 8th of February, 1838, the principal chief of that region met General Jessup, by appointment. The latter agreed to recommend peace upon the basis of allowing the negro allies to remain and occupy a portion of the southern part of Florida, and permitting in the mean while the Indians to occupy the Territory, near the place of negotiation, until the views of the President could be ascertained. Writing to the Secretary of War, the next day, General Jessup expressed the opinion that the prospect of terminating the war by employing an army to explore the country to remove a band of savages from one part of the country to another was not very flattering; that he did not consider the country south of the Chick-a-so-hatchie worth the "medicines" they would expend in driving the Indians from it; and that, unless the idea of "immediate emigration" was abandoned, the war would continue many years at great expense.

But the Indians were doomed to fresh disappointment. The Secretary replied that removal was the settled policy of the government, and he could not sanction any arrangement which would assign any portion of Florida as the future residence of the Indians and their allies. Supposing, however, that the proposed arrangement would be carried out, five hundred and thirteen Indians and one hundred and sixty-five negroes had assembled near the encampment. They had met there to negotiate a peace on the idea of remaining in the country. Four days after he received the decision of the Secretary of War he directed the Indian chiefs to meet him in council. They did not do so, however, in consequence, as it was believed, of this decision having become known to them. He at once ordered General Twiggs to seize them and hold them as prisoners. Fourteen of the negroes were represented to be slaves of citizens of Florida, and were treated as such. The remainder were hurried off to Tampa Bay, and there confined.



General Hernandez captured several Indians, and restored more than three hundred negroes to the citizens. How many were fugitives and how many were free negroes and exiles will never be known.

John Ross addressed a letter to the Secretary of War demanding the release of the prisoners who had come in with a flag of truce through the influence of the Cherokee delegation. The House of Representatives, on motion of Mr. Everett of Vermont, called for information concerning this violation of the flag of truce. The Secretary of War attempted to justify this act of treachery by alleging that the Indians had shown bad faith to the United States. His attempt, however, to transfer the charge from the criminal to the victims only committed the administration more fully to the disgraceful policy pursued towards the Indians, and prompted Mr. Everett to make a most thorough exposure of the outrage in an able speech, calling public attention and greatly exciting the indignation of the country at this persistent policy of the government against humanity, justice, and the most manifest claims of equity and fair dealing.

After General Taylor, however, took the command, there was a great improvement. Discarding his predecessor's policy, the army was no longer employed to chase down and seize women and children, to be delivered into slavery. He denied the right of any citizens to inspect those captured or to meddle with his prisoners. He no longer separated the Indians from the negroes, but treated both as prisoners of war. Under his more humane and dignified policy many came in and were sent to their homes in the West. In the spring of 1839 General McComb went to Florida. After consulting with the Indians, he issued an order setting apart a portion of this Territory for their future residence ; at the same time forbidding any white persons to enter upon it without permission. The people of Florida, understanding that in the war with the Indians the negroes were to be given up to them, protested for this reason against the peace.

The war had continued for nearly eight years. During that time several hundred persons had been seized and enslaved,

nearly forty million dollars had been expended, and hundreds of lives had been lost. The exiles who had been sent West, fearful that they would be reduced to slavery by the Creeks, remained in the Cherokee country, hoping that there would be assigned to them a territory, as stipulated in the "additional treaty." Their expectations and disappointments were represented to the general government, but no action was taken. The Cherokees, too, were dissatisfied at the refusal of the government to set apart territory for the Seminoles and exiles. But the President adhered to his policy of having the Seminoles and their allies removed to the jurisdiction of the Creeks; while the Creeks held firmly to their purpose to re-enslave the exiles whenever they should come under their jurisdiction.

In 1845 a treaty was made with the Creeks and Seminoles, in which it was agreed that all contested cases between the tribes in regard to rights of property should be subject to the decision of the President. The Creeks agreed that the Seminoles should settle as a body or separately in their country, and no discrimination should be made between the two tribes; and the Seminoles agreed to move to the Creek reservation. But no sooner were they settled on their reservation, than the Creeks claimed the exiles as their slaves. The Seminoles and exiles appealed to the President, according to the terms of the treaty, to determine the question. The President not making a decision, the Creeks became impatient of delay, and threatened violence unless their demands were acceded to. The exiles, repairing to Fort Gibson and demanding protection of General Arbuckle, its commander, were directed to encamp on the reservation near the fort, and were promised protection there. The President, who had supposed that the matter would be easily settled when the exiles were placed under Creek jurisdiction, referred the matter to General Jessup. That officer reported that he had solemnly pledged the nation's faith that they should not be separated, nor any of them sold to white men; that they were free and under the protection of the United States, and that this had been promised them. The matter was then referred to the Attorney-General, another

Virginia slaveholder. He decided that the exiles were entitled to their freedom; that the President could not interfere; and that they must return to their towns in the Indian country, where they had a right to remain.

Informed of this decision the exiles returned to their villages, and for a short time were unmolested. But a slave-dealer, who appears by documents in the War Department to have been previously engaged in kidnapping, went among the Creeks and offered them one hundred dollars for any exile taken and delivered to him, he assuming all risks of titles. Two hundred Creeks assembled, entered the negro villages, and seized several of the exiles. Those, however, having arms offering resistance, they retired with their captives, delivered them to the slave-dealer, and received the stipulated price. The Indian agent obtained a warrant from the nearest judge in Arkansas, and the captured exiles were brought before him. He urged in their behalf the promises of General Jessup, the opinion of the Attorney-General, and the action of the President, as evidence that they were free. But the judge decided that the Creeks had obtained a title to them by their contract; that their title was good; and, having sold them to the claimant, his title was also good. By this strange and wicked decision these manacled victims were thus suddenly and hopelessly bereft of freedom, taken to the New Orleans market, and sold into perpetual bondage.

Alarmed for their safety, and losing all confidence in the government that had thus betrayed them, more than three hundred of these exiles left the United States and went to Mexico, while one or two hundred, connected with the Seminoles by marriage, remained behind. Stimulated by the slave-dealers the Creeks pursued them. Overtaking them, a battle was fought, and the exiles, under the lead of Wild Cat, drove back the slave-catching Creeks, who left their dead upon the field. Directing their course southwesterly the exiles crossed the Rio Grande and settled on a rich and productive soil, where, at length, they found for themselves homes, which had been so cruelly and persistently denied them in the United States. Was the truthfulness of Wesley's characterization of



slavery as "the sum of all villanies" ever more completely verified and illustrated than in this sad and strange story of the conduct of the citizens and governments of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and the United States towards these Indians and exiles?

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### DEMAND FOR THE RECOGNITION OF PROPERTY IN SLAVES.

The Greed of Gain gratified by Slavery. — Mr. Whittlesey's Report. — Debates on the Question of Slave Property. — Spanish Treaty. — The Florida Claims. — Mr. Cooper's Report. — Mr. Giddings's and Mr. Adams's Speeches. — Payment for Slaves by the British Government. — Mr. Fillmore's Bill. — Speech of Mr. Giddings. — Violent Scenes in the House. — Degrading Influences of Slavery. — General Jessup's Contract with the Indians. — Watson's Claim. — General Gaines's Order. — His Honorable Conduct. — The Collins Claim. — Action of General Taylor. — Faithless Action of the Government. — Renewal of Watson's Claim. — Reports on the Claim. — Watson's Claim allowed. — Claim of Pacheco. — Failure of the Bill.

THOUGH other elements entered into the complex motive which originated and sustained slavery, that of pecuniary profit was most general and mischievous. Indeed it was ever a prolific source of discord, as there were ever arising conflicting claims in which the principle of property in man was involved. And yet there was a shrinking, on the part of the majority, from its open and undisguised avowal. The fact of slavery was recognized in the Constitution, and the legislation of the general government, but it was as persons, and not as property, that slaves were referred to. Nor was "the guilty fantasy" fully admitted until after many oft-repeated and oft-defeated trials.

Questions growing out of the war of 1812 involving this principle were early brought to the attention of the government. Slaves taken by officers as servants, and slaves hired in other capacities, were lost, and applications for payment were made. In all these cases it was decided that slaves should be considered persons, and not property, and that the government was not to be held liable to pay for slaves lost in the public service, whether killed in battle or disabled and destroyed by any other agency.

In the XXth Congress an application was made by M. D'Au-  
trieve of New Orleans to be remunerated for the lost time  
and hospital charges of his slave, Warwick, who was wounded  
in the public service. The claim having been referred to the  
Committee on Claims, Mr. Whittlesey of Ohio reported against  
it on the ground that the government had never, in a single in-  
stance, recognized the principle that slaves were property, or  
paid for slaves lost in its service. Mr. Livingston of Louisiana  
at once denounced the report as a "by blow" to the idea that  
slaves were property. He appealed to the representatives who  
were so happy as not to have that kind of property not to lay  
the foundation for discontent, jealousy, and divisions, by insist-  
ing on such a discrimination against Southern interests. He  
moved an amendment providing for the compensation asked  
for. "Allow the claim," he said, "and you do no more than  
justice; reject it on these principles, and you shake the  
Union."

Upon the bill and amendment a debate continued several  
weeks, in which some of the ablest men of the House partici-  
pated. Much feeling was excited, and the debate was char-  
acterized by a thorough examination of the subject. John  
Randolph maintained that property was the creation of law;  
that what "the law makes property is property." He repu-  
diated the doctrine that the Constitution was the protection  
of slave property. It was created, he contended, by State  
laws, and the Southern States were able to maintain it. He  
expressed the hope that no Southern members would deign to  
debate the question of property in slaves, or allow the general  
government under any circumstances to touch the question.

Mr. Drayton of South Carolina maintained that the claim was  
legitimate, and was justified by the Constitution and the laws.  
He expressed the deepest abhorrence of slavery in the abstract;  
said the African slave-ship was a spectacle from which all men  
would recoil with horror unless their hearts had been steeled  
by the vilest love of lucre; but he thought slavery in the States  
had grown with their growth, and was then irremediable. "Our  
consolation," he said, "is that we did not originate it; when  
a colony we struggled against it; we found it at our birth; it



was a part of our inheritance, from which we can no more deliver ourselves than we can from the miasma of our swamps, or the rays of our burning sun. However ameliorated by compassion, however corrected by religion, still slavery is a bitter draught, and the chalice which contains the noxious potion is more frequently pressed by the lips of the master than the slave."

Philip P. Barbour and Archer of Virginia, Hamilton and McDuffie of South Carolina, defended the claim. Some Northern members also spoke in its favor. Mr. Ingham of Pennsylvania, afterward Secretary of the Treasury under General Jackson, characterized the doctrine advanced by the committee as fallacious, and maintained that if the government had taken the property it was bound to give compensation. Even Edward Everett of Massachusetts favored the claim, remarking that it arose under the provision of the Constitution which declared that private property should not be taken for public uses without compensation; and he added that by rejecting the amendment Congress would introduce into that instrument the qualification, "excepting for slaves."

The claim, however, was strenuously opposed, though, as was common in those days before sectional lines were so clearly drawn, by varied lines of argument and thought. Thus Mr. Storrs of New York agreed with Mr. Randolph that the Constitution had nothing to do with the question, as that never fixed the relation between master and slave. He was, however, in favor of rejecting the claim, leaving the question at issue to be met under the pressure of some future and more imperious necessity. Tristram Burgess of Rhode Island made a characteristic speech in opposition to the claim. He said the question referred to the deterioration which had happened to a slave while in the performance of ordinary labor for the United States; that no freeman ever made such a claim, or received such compensation; and that this would be the beginning of a series of claims which would be pressed or withdrawn, according to the character of the vote now given. To remove the jealousies of Southern men toward the North he entered upon an apologetical explanation of the state of feeling in the

free States on the subject of slavery. There was a small class, he said, who were in favor of immediate emancipation. They had unbounded zeal, but were entirely without knowledge or wisdom, and could do nothing, as their number was small, their wisdom was small, and their influence was still more inconsiderable. Another class embraced philanthropists, such men as composed the Colonization Society. They looked to the gradual removal of slavery from this country, and the gradual peopling of Africa with freemen. Southern men, he said unwittingly, though truthfully, had nothing to fear from this large and influential class of genuine philanthropists. There was another class who saw the superiority of free over slave labor; but Southern men would have nothing to fear from that class, as it was composed of those who would never disturb the tenure by which that kind of labor was maintained. He opposed the claim, however, and sharply reproved those who pressed the question and threatened that the decision would dissolve the Union; who declared that the discussion and the Constitution would terminate together; and that Southern gentlemen would leave the hall in case of an adverse decision.

Mr. Barnard of New York opposed the amendment in a speech of remarkable clearness of statement and force of logic. Mr. Miner of Pennsylvania based his opposition mainly on the ground of justice. "I cannot," he said, "give my sanction to the principles that would take the farmer and mechanic of Pennsylvania to defend a Southern city from an invading enemy, risking poverty and death in your defence, and, if one of your slaves in the battle shall be slain, that you may send the tax-gatherer to such farmer and mechanic, if he should chance to survive, demanding aid from him in payment for such slaves." The amendment was adopted by a close vote, the bill was recommitted to the committee, but was not heard of again.

A similar demand, involving the same principle, was based upon one of the stipulations in the treaty formed in 1820 between the governments of the United States and Spain. By that treaty it was agreed that the inhabitants of Florida should be remunerated for losses sustained by them in the previous

military operations in their Territory under General Jackson. The different character of the claims prompted to different responses. The claim growing out of the visit of the American troops in 1814 was mainly for one hundred slaves which camp-followers had taken ; that of the invasion of 1818 was for supplies taken from the inhabitants for the support of the troops. The last was promptly paid ; but the first, involving the principle of property in man, Mr. Crawford, an aspirant for the presidency, rejected. The claimants then appealed to Congress, and their claim was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Their appeal to the next Congress secured a favorable report from the committee to which it was referred, as Mr. Everett was ready to pay a claim which Southern statesmen like Crawford and Archer had refused. But it was rejected in the House. The claim, thus twice defeated in the House, was again presented to the Secretary of the Treasury. Mr. Woodbury paid several thousand dollars, but ascertaining that Mr. Crawford had refused the demand he suspended further payment.

Repulsed at the Treasury Department, these persistent claimants again approached Congress. Their petition was referred to the Committee on Claims. But Mr. Giddings being chairman, no action was taken. Appealing again to the same body, the petitioners were gratified by having their demand referred to the Committee on Territories. Its chairman was James Cooper, a native of Maryland, then a representative from Pennsylvania, afterward senator and a general in the war of the Rebellion. Though informed by Mr. Giddings of its character, and of the reasons which influenced his adverse decision, yet, belonging to that large class of Northern statesmen which has always seemed to have a tender regard for slaveholders, Mr. Cooper reported in favor of the claims. The bill coming up for consideration, Mr. Giddings, who had mastered the subject, made a vigorous speech in opposition, and so far convinced even Mr. Cooper himself that he refused to vote for his own report. Mr. Adams, becoming deeply interested in the question, and obtaining from the Treasury Department a list of ninety negroes, for whom payment was demanded, spoke



strongly in opposition to the claims. Both he and Mr. Giddings dwelt largely upon the moral considerations involved in the proposition to recognize the principle of property in man. Their speeches made a deep impression, and though the delegate from Florida spoke in defence of the bill, there were but thirty-six ayes recorded in its favor. As an illustration of the sentiment and feeling which pervaded the House, Mr. Giddings states that after the vote was taken, Mr. Pickens of South Carolina came across the hall to the seat of his colleague, Mr. Campbell, and asked him why he did not vote for the bill. "Why did not you vote for it?" responded Mr. Campbell. "Because I was ashamed to do so," replied Mr. Pickens. "Such was my case," said Mr. Campbell. And yet while these slaveholders from South Carolina were ashamed to support the proposition, the Democratic members from New Hampshire did not hesitate to record their votes in its favor.

Near the close of the session of 1841 Mr. Thompson of South Carolina asked leave to introduce a bill appropriating one hundred thousand dollars for the benefit of the Seminoles and their chiefs who should surrender for the purpose of emigrating to the West. Mr. Giddings states that the object of the bill was the purchase of the pretended interest of certain white citizens in the exiles they claimed to own. Being better informed than any other member concerning the origin, cause, and history of the Florida war, he did not fail to oppose the bill, laying bare at the same time the crimes and rascalities involved in a contest prosecuted mainly for the re-enslavement of those and their posterity who had sought in that Territory a refuge from the oppressor. His speech caused great excitement among the Georgia members, and he was repeatedly called to order. When he closed, Mr. Cooper, of that State, replied, denouncing abolitionism as "a moral pestilence," and Mr. Giddings and Mr. Adams as abolition leaders. Black, also of Georgia, followed in a high state of excitement, avowing his purpose to be personally offensive to Mr. Giddings, and declaring if the latter should go to Georgia he "would be hanged." The delegate from Florida made a feeble and vulgar assault, while Mr. Thompson took occasion

to say that the Whig party was not responsible for the conduct of "the very obscurest of the obscure individuals belonging to that party."

To this insulting language Mr. Giddings replied with dignified and unruffled firmness, denying the prerogative of the gentleman to designate his position in the Whig party, and assuring Mr. Thompson that he fully appreciated the insult intended. Though he could not resent it after the method so common at the South, he would say, in the language of a military veteran to a young officer who spat in his face, expecting to draw from him a challenge, "Could I as easily wipe the stain of your blood from my soul, you should not live an hour." Mr. Alford, springing from his seat with profane and menacing language, rushed towards him, but was met by Mr. Briggs of Massachusetts and persuaded to return to his seat. Mr. Thompson again assured the House that he spoke the feelings of both Northern and Southern Whigs, when he assured the member from Ohio that he was considered "the very obscurest of the obscure members of the Whig party."

Mr. Giddings states that General Harrison, soon to be inaugurated, arriving in Washington on the day the debate occurred, expressed great dissatisfaction at its occurrence, and avowed his purpose to relieve the Whig party from any odium brought upon it by the course of Mr. Giddings. The next day Mr. Giddings called upon him, but the President elect gave him such unmistakable indications of his displeasure, that he never called upon him again. Mr. Giddings was from the same State, had served with him in the war of 1812, and had toiled for his election; but, true to his convictions, he maintained the freedom of debate, and exposed the crimes of the Florida war. Mr. Thompson was from a State that had given General Harrison no vote, and had insulted an honest and God-fearing man, because of his stalwart defence of right and outraged humanity. The former was rewarded by a Northern President with the mission to Mexico, the latter with coldness and manifest tokens of his displeasure. But Mr. Thompson, though the recipient of executive favor, is forgotten, or scarcely remembered; while Mr. Giddings, whom he insolently charac-

terized as "the very obscurest of the obscure individuals belonging to the Whig party," left a national reputation which his countrymen cherish with increasing regard, a name which they "will not willingly let die."

The British government had agreed to pay the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars for slaves on board the "Hornet" and "Encomium," which had been wrecked in its possessions in the West India waters before its act of emancipation. The President, distributing this appropriation to its claimants without consulting Congress, paid on his retirement four thousand dollars which had not been called for into the treasury. Slave-dealers, claiming this balance which the Secretary of the Treasury refused to pay without authority of Congress, at once applied to that body. The claim was referred to the Committee of Ways and Means. A bill was reported by unanimous consent of the committee to pay the money to the owners of the slaves. The ever-watchful Giddings went to Mr. Stanley of North Carolina, who had charge of the bill, explained to him its character, and proposed that the Treasurer should be authorized to replace the money, which he held without authority of law, into the hands of the President, who would doubtless pay it over to the claimants, and Congress would be relieved of the odium of the transaction. Mr. Stanley agreed to accept the proposition as a substitute for the original bill. The amendment was accepted by the House, but rejected by the Senate. Mr. Giddings states that when it came up in the House for concurrence, he asked Mr. Stanley for an explanation of that violation of good faith, but received none; that he then expressed a desire to speak upon the measure, to which Mr. Stanley apparently consented; but when it came up, the latter moved the previous question, and the bill was passed.

Mr. Giddings then, obtaining the floor, moved a reconsideration of the vote. Indignant at the treatment he had received, he denounced both it and the measure. Alluding to the fact that it was designed to pay the slaveholding constituents of Mr. Stanley for losses they had incurred in their vocation, he thanked God that he did not hold his seat by the votes of "piratical slave-dealers." He entered, too, his earnest pro-



test against the policy of making the Whig party incur the odium of thus sustaining a commerce in human flesh. He showed how Presidents Jackson and Van Buren had condescended to become the solicitors and agents of slave-dealers; how they obtained payment from England by falsely representing, through Mr. Stevenson, that Congress "regarded slaves as property, and paid for them as such when lost in the public service in time of war." He said the representation was "untrue," and affirmed that the records would show that when that question had been raised in Congress the House of Representatives had "repudiated" the doctrine. He charged Mr. Stevenson, who was Speaker of the House in 1828, when that doctrine was thus repudiated, with uttering an "unmitigated falsehood."

Mr. Giddings challenged the representatives from Virginia in Congress to show one instance in which the House had decided that slaves were "property," or had voted to pay for them as such. The assertion, he said, was "a libel upon Congress and upon the people of the nation," and he protested that he denied the doctrine and would not be a party to the falsehood. He said he felt humbled and deeply humiliated, on looking around him, to see two hundred and thirty American statesmen sitting in that hall and gravely legislating in behalf of piratical slave-dealers, whose crimes had rendered them moral outlaws, unfit for human association, and fitted only for the gallows. He showed with great force of logic that Congress had neither moral nor constitutional right to involve the people of the free States in a war for the defence of the slave-trade. He sharply criticised, too, both the President and the Senate for their action in committing the nation to the support of the domestic slave-trade, and of the "heathenish" doctrine of property in man.

Neither Mr. Fillmore who reported nor Mr. Stanley who had charge of the bill attempted any vindication of the principles involved in it. Caleb Cushing, who had become a champion of Mr. Tyler's administration, contended that, the money being in the treasury of the United States, Congress became trustee for its distribution. It was therefore bound to make the distribution without regard to the circumstances under which it

came into its custody. The motion for reconsideration failed by a large majority.

Mr. Giddings then rose to a privileged question. He stated that while he was addressing the House he noticed several persons standing in front of the clerk's desk, one of whom was Mr. Dawson of Louisiana; that when he had concluded his speech he was pushed by what appeared to be the elbow of a person, and at the same moment Mr. Dawson passed him on his way to the clerk's desk; that he addressed him in an undertone, when he turned round, seized the handle of a bowie-knife, which partly protruded from his bosom, and advanced towards him till within striking distance. Looking him in the eye, he inquired whether he pushed him in that rude manner. "Yes," he answered. "For the purpose," inquired Mr. Giddings, "of insulting me?" "Yes," he replied, partially removing his knife from its sheath. Mr. Giddings then said: "No gentleman will wantonly insult another. I have no more to say to you, but turn you over to public contempt as incapable of insulting another." Dawson was then seized by one of his colleagues and taken from the hall. In laying these facts before the House, Mr. Giddings wished it to be distinctly understood that he did not claim the protection of the House, but left that body to protect its own dignity.

Alexander H. H. Stuart, a Whig member from Virginia, afterward Secretary of the Interior, then stated that he had noticed Mr. Dawson standing in front of the clerk's desk; that, from his appearance, he apprehended an intention of violence, but lost sight of him until he appeared in the aisle where Mr. Giddings was standing. Mr. Wise expressed the opinion that the member had intended no insult to Mr. Giddings. Mr. Adams rose and, in allusion to an incident that occurred a few days before when the same individual, offended at some remarks made by Mr. Arnold of Tennessee, went to his seat and assured him that if he did not keep quiet he would "cut his throat from ear to ear," inquired whether he had made the same threat to Mr. Giddings he had to the gentleman from Tennessee. It was believed that, acting with the approbation of others, Dawson

intended to insult Mr. Giddings and thus draw from him a blow, which would have been an excuse for an assault with a deadly weapon. In a letter, written on the same day this scene occurred, David Lee Child wrote: "I was sitting in the gallery. I saw Dawson in the centre of the hall, amidst a crowd of Southern members, all of whom were looking extremely wrathful, and one of them, as I am informed by a member, said with an oath, 'I would like to cut off Giddings's ears.'"

This disgraceful and instructive incident had a threefold significance. It was an illustration of the tone and temper of that slaveholding *regime* which controlled the land for more than half a century. It revealed the craven spirit of the North, which, though largely in the majority, submitted to such dictation, pocketed such insults, and gave to the villanous cause itself that municipal support and power without which it could not have maintained itself a single day. It revealed, too, the heroism and martyr spirit demanded in the few who dared to confront these violent men and meet the dangers thus incurred. Still such scenes were not without their influence at the North, nor could they fail to impress upon many there some idea of the degrading and dangerous presence of a system that generated such a spirit and prompted to such deeds.

In 1845 the subject of property in man was again forced upon public attention by appeals made to the XXVIIIth Congress for its practical recognition. The way in which this was sought, with its antecedents, was still more degrading, the necessary recital of which may well make any American ear tingle with shame, as thus reminded of the base uses to which the government lent itself in its ignoble service to the slave-mongers.

On assuming the command of the army in Florida in 1836, General Jessup, without authority of law, entered into a contract with the Creeks by which they were to receive such plunder as they might capture; and this unauthorized contract was approved by the President and Secretary of War. Among this "plunder" were one hundred negroes which they claimed as coming within the meaning of the contract. This under-



standing was approved by the President and his Secretary of War, and this Christian republic stood before the world as recognizing the principle that prisoners of war might be held as slaves.

Complicating matters still more, he gave orders that eight thousand dollars should be paid for these negroes, and that they be sent to Fort Pike and held as the property of the United States. And even this order was approved by the President, and, so far as his authority could effect it, the nation became the purchaser of slaves. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, however, suggested to the Secretary of War a doubt as to the willingness of Congress, in the then state of the public mind, to appropriate the funds to carry into effect General Jessup's order. For thirteen months this question remained unsettled, and it was finally determined to abrogate General Jessup's order, though it had been approved, and to declare that the Creek Indians were the owners of the negroes sent to Fort Pike.

In this exigency it was suggested, he says, by government officials, to James C. Watson, a Georgia slaveholder, to purchase these negroes, pay for them the sum of fifteen thousand dollars, and receive a bill of sale, on the condition that the Secretary of War should issue an order to the officers of the army to deliver them to him or to his agent. This sale was effected on the 7th of May, 1838. While the government officials were the active parties in the negotiation, the sale was effected in the name of the Creeks. One Collins, brother-in-law of Watson, was appointed an agent, and furnished with written instructions by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to repair to New Orleans and receive the negroes.

But a few days before these slaves had been purchased by Watson, General Gaines had issued an order directing Major Clark to make arrangements for the embarkation of the Seminoles and "black prisoners of war," then in Louisiana, for their place of destination in the Indian country. At the same time, as if to make the whole transaction more complicated, the claim of a slave-dealer was allowed by the Louisiana courts to sixty of these negro prisoners. Having secured a favorable

decision of the court, he demanded them of General Gaines. But that officer, to his great credit, refused assent, and ordered that they should be confined in the barracks for their safe keeping. He also resisted the requisition of the sheriff of New Orleans, on the ground that they were prisoners of war. Familiar with both the facts and the law of the case; knowing, too, that the most intimate domestic and social relations, from intermarriage and the ties of friendship, existed between them, he was willing to assume the personal responsibility of the costs, to appear before the courts, and to plead the laws of nations and of war in vindication of the position that these negroes were, and should be treated as, prisoners of war. He assured the court that they were not captured from the white people in that or any previous war. Professing to act from his convictions, he said: "I have not learned, while acting in my official capacity on oath, to take the responsibility of doing what is repugnant to law, unjust, and iniquitous, as, I verily believe, any favor shown to this claim would be." The judge, however, assuming, under the laws of Louisiana, that negroes were slaves to some one, discharged the rule, and affirmed the order of sequestration.

Lieutenant Reynolds, leaving thirty-one of the negroes behind, embarked with the Seminoles and negro prisoners of war for the Indian country. But the next day Watson's agent arrived, and, finding that Reynolds had started, immediately followed and overtook him at Vicksburg. Convinced by the evidences of sorrow and mutual interest and attachment exhibited between the Indians and negroes at parting at New Orleans that he must proceed with caution, Lieutenant Reynolds persuaded the agent to accompany him. Arriving at Little Rock, he called upon the government officials for assistance. Governor Roane, though a slaveholder, declared that there were no witnesses to identify the negroes, expressed the apprehension that to enforce the claim would endanger the frontier settlers of Arkansas, and, instead of rendering assistance, urged him to proceed at once to his point of destination. Arriving at Fort Gibson, Lieutenant Reynolds enclosed to General Arbuckle the order of the Indian Commissioner to sur-

render the negroes to Watson's agent, with the request that he would give him an adequate force to carry his instructions into effect. The request was refused, however, on the ground that there was no evidence to indicate who were included in the claim.

But the War Department, having been a party to the sale of these "prisoners of war," sought to carry out that slave-dealing bargain so far as the thirty-one negroes remaining at New Orleans were concerned. General Taylor's co-operation was sought in a letter from the Adjutant-General. But that honest and straightforward man would be party to no such arrangement. In his letter of reply he said: "I know nothing of the negroes in question, nor of the subject further than what is contained in the communication; but I must state distinctly for the information of all concerned, that, while I shall hold myself ever ready to do the utmost in my power to get the negroes and Indians out of Florida, as well as to remove them to their new homes west of the Mississippi, I cannot, for a moment, consent to meddle with this transaction, or to be concerned for the benefit of Collins, the Creek Indians, or any one else." This noble letter no more inured to the credit of its writer than it reflected upon the action of General Jessup, of the War Department, and of the President of the United States.

Collins returned to New Orleans, but Major Clark refused to turn the negroes over to him as Watson's agent. They were at once despatched to their Western home, but only to find new proof of the bad faith of the government. Though it had been stipulated with them, as an inducement for them to go west, that a separate tract should be assigned them, they found on their arrival that they were to be taken to territory assigned to the Creeks, where they would be subjected to Creek laws. The Cherokees had used their influence to persuade the Seminoles to go west, and they felt that they were in honor bound to fulfil their pledges as far as in their power, and so they consented that they should remain on their reservation until the United States government could be persuaded to discharge its obligations to this abused and scattered people.



Without country, the victims of grasping slaveholders, these Indians and exiles appealed for redress to the same government which had already proved so faithless to its promises. But President Van Buren and Mr. Poinsett, his Secretary of War, instead of regarding these appeals, were renewing their efforts to secure for Watson the negro prisoners of war he had purchased. General Arbuckle, who had been directed to investigate the case, replied that not one of them could be obtained without force. Of course the slave-dealer grew restive and impatient under these delays, and wrote to the Indian Commissioner, severely arraiguing the military authorities. Lieutenant Reynolds was under the necessity, therefore, of explaining away these charges. The demands being still pressed, the government made further but ineffectual attempts to meet them. The Seminoles refused to surrender the exiles, and the Creeks would hold no further communication on the subject either with Watson or the officials.

Baffled in all these efforts, he turned his attention to Congress, petitioning that body for what he failed to obtain from the executive officers of the government; and at the commencement of the session in 1839 the petition was referred to the Committee on Claims. Mr. Dawson of Georgia called to it the attention of Mr. Giddings, its chairman; but he reported against it. At the next session it was referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs. A bill was reported; but it failed to become a law. In the XXVIIIth Congress ex-Governor Vance of Ohio was made chairman of the Committee on Claims, in place of Mr. Giddings, who had thus far prevented favorable action, and Mr. Howell Cobb was placed on the committee for the purpose of securing a favorable report. Such a report and bill being presented, it was advocated by Mr. Cobb, Mr. Stephens, and Mr. Belser of Alabama, each alleging that it did not involve the question of property in human flesh; opposed by Mr. Giddings and Mr. Adams; and no vote was reached. Not discouraged, Watson persisted in pressing his claim; though he was again defeated, in 1848, notwithstanding a favorable report from Mr. Daniel of North Carolina.

In February, 1852, Daniel reported again in its favor. A long debate arose, in which several members took part, a favorable vote was reached, and the bill passed by a majority of twenty-six, one member alone from the slave States, William R. Cobb of Alabama, voting against it. In the Senate it met but little opposition. Thus was consummated, after a delay and struggle of thirteen years, that infamous bargain between a slave speculator and the United States, by which prisoners of war were sold as slaves, and in which were ignored not only the laws of God and humanity, but the laws of the nation and the laws of war.

Another case involving this idea of property in man was that of Antonio Pacheco, who presented in 1848 a petition to Congress for the loss of the slave Lewis, whom he had let to Major Dade as a guide, who had been captured by the Indians, surrendered to General Jessup, and sent west of the Mississippi. It appeared from the testimony of General Jessup that Lewis was a man of extraordinary talents, who had kept up a correspondence with the Seminoles, and had been sent west as "a dangerous man." The petition was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, Mr. Burt of South Carolina being chairman; and a bill was reported in accordance with the prayer of the petitioner. Mr. Dickey of Pennsylvania, assisted by Mr. Giddings, drew up an adverse report. At the meeting of the committee the four Democratic members signed the report of the chairman; and Marvin of New York, Wilson of New Hampshire, and Fisher of Ohio signed that of Mr. Dickey. The majority held that slaves were property; and the minority contended that "one man could not hold property in another." No action, however, was taken.

Coming up at the next session, Mr. Dickey and Mr. Wilson of New Hampshire spoke against it, while Mr. Brown of Mississippi and Mr. Cabell of Florida followed on the other side. Mr. Burt closed the debate with the assertion that the simple question involved in the bill is, Are slaves property? The motion to lay it on the table was rejected by nineteen majority. Mr. Giddings moved a reconsideration, in support of which he made a very able speech, accepting the issue ten-

dered by Mr. Burt, and boldly enunciating the doctrines of human rights. By a mistake of the clerk it appeared that the casting vote of the Speaker would be necessary, which would have been cast against the bill. Subsequently, however, it appeared that one vote had not been counted, and the bill was lost by that majority. A reconsideration was moved and carried, and the bill was passed by a majority of six. By that majority the House of Representatives declared that slaves were property ; but the bill was not acted upon by the Senate, and it failed of becoming a law.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE LIBERTY PARTY.

Early Abolitionists pledged to Political Action. — Questioning Candidates. — Seward, Cushing, Fillmore, Brooks, Parmenter. — A Political Party demanded. — Myron Holley. — New York State Society call a National Convention at Albany. — Opposed by the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Society. — Meeting of the Convention. — Nomination of James G. Birney for President and Thomas Earle for Vice-President. — Small Vote. — Address of Committee. — Salmon P. Chase. — State Convention in Ohio. — Peterboro' Convention. — Address to the Slaves. — National Convention. — Resolutions. — Candidates. — Philadelphia Convention. — Professor Cleveland's Address. — Election. — Western and Southwestern Convention. — Mr. Chase's Address. — Eastern Convention. — Dissensions. — Unconstitutionality of Slavery. — Divisions.

THE early Abolitionists were pledged to the removal of slavery by political as well as moral agencies. Their modes of political action, however, were undefined. Some contemplated it through existing political organizations, others through the formation of a new party. Mr. Garrison, as early as 1834, advocated the organization of a "Christian party in politics"; and two years later Professor Follen suggested the idea of a new, progressive Democratic party, of which the abolition of slavery should be a fundamental principle. William Goodell, Alvan Stewart, Myron Holley, James G. Birney, Joshua Leavitt, Gerrit Smith, and other eminent Abolitionists, early and persistently urged political action, and the formation of a party that should make the abolition of slavery a paramount issue.

Antislavery men first exemplified the principle of political action by questioning candidates for public office. Though their questions were generally treated with neglect, their numbers so increased that they were able, in some localities, to effect results. In 1838, in the great contest in New York, William H. Seward and Luther Bradish, Whig candidates for

governor and lieutenant-governor, gave respectful answers to their questions, while the Democratic candidates refused to answer at all. The answers of Mr. Bradish were satisfactory; those of Mr. Seward were but partially so, and their majorities were unquestionably increased by the abolition votes they received. At this election, Millard Fillmore, who was a candidate for Congress, was also questioned and gave satisfactory replies; and he received the antislavery vote. In after years, however, he forgot the pledges he then gave, and disappointed the hopes he then excited.

Among the questioned candidates of those days was Caleb Cushing of Massachusetts. He had vindicated in Congress the right of petition with signal zeal and ability; and, when plied with questions, he framed his reply so as to meet even the exacting demands of John G. Whittier. But, like Mr. Fillmore, he failed to remember the pledges he was then so prompt to give; and, a few years later, he was found ready to use the patronage of the Federal government "to crush out the spirit of Abolitionism" in his native State.

In the Middlesex district of the same State, Nathan Brooks and William Parmenter were candidates for Congress. Mr. Parmenter, the Democratic candidate, was known to be unsound and unreliable on the antislavery issue. Mr. Brooks, the Whig candidate, though known by his personal friends to be in sympathy with his questioners, declined to answer, from conscientious scruples about giving such pledges. His wife, a lady of culture, was then and continued to be an earnest and self-sacrificing Abolitionist; one of that class of antislavery women to whose early labors the cause was so largely indebted. But the Abolitionists, firmly adhering to their policy, refused, without such pledges, to give him their votes, and he was defeated.

The plan of questioning candidates in its practical workings not proving satisfactory, a distinct political organization was demanded by some of the Abolitionists. At a meeting of the New York State Antislavery Society, held at Utica, in September, 1838, a series of resolutions, setting forth with distinctness the principles of political action, and pledging the society to

vote for no candidate unpledged to antislavery measures, was adopted. These resolutions were drawn by William Goodell, and reported by the business committee, at the head of which was Myron Holley. They were not intended to commit the Abolitionists of New York to the formation of a new political party; but they enunciated principles of action to which, in the then existing state of political parties, it was difficult to adhere without such an organization.

At the sixth anniversary meeting of the American Antislavery Society, in May, 1839, a committee was appointed to call a national convention to discuss the principles and measures of the antislavery enterprise. This convention assembled at Albany on the last of July. The convention was not largely attended, nor did its result fully satisfy those who desired a distinct political organization. It issued an address, however, in which it was asserted that the Slave Power was waging a deliberate and determined war against the liberties of the free States; that the political power of slavery could only be met by political action; and that slavery must be driven out and dethroned from the stronghold in which it was so firmly entrenched by the ballot-box. In September an antislavery county convention was held at Rochester, New York. A few months before the meeting of that convention, Myron Holley, a resident of that city, had established the "Freeman," in which he had advocated political action with such earnestness and ability that he has been regarded, by common consent, the founder of the Liberty party.

Mr. Holley was a gentleman of superior attainments. He had held a leading position in the politics of Western New York as a supporter of De Witt Clinton, and was a canal commissioner during a considerable portion of the time in which the Erie Canal was in process of construction. He was a ripe scholar, a ready writer, an impressive speaker, and an urbane gentleman, of graceful manners and commanding presence. A bold thinker, and of large forecast, he clearly saw that slavery was to be put down either by the ballot-box or by the cartridge-box, or perhaps by both. He was for hastening without delay a resort to the former, in order that the stern appeal to



the latter might if possible be averted. It was under such a leader that the convention adopted a series of resolutions and an address, in which the necessity of distinct political action was recognized, and the duty enjoined.

In the month of January, 1840, the New York State Antislavery Society held a convention in Genesee County. Mr. Holley, Gerrit Smith, and other Abolitionists, favorable to political action, were present. It was resolved to issue a call for a national antislavery convention, to be held on the 1st of April at Albany. This convention was called to discuss "the question of an independent nomination of abolition candidates for the two highest offices in our national government; and, if thought expedient, to make such nominations for the friends of freedom to support at the next election."

The executive committee of the national society took no action in relation to this movement of the New York society; but the board of managers of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society issued an address to the Abolitionists of the United States, in which they took exceptions to the manner in which the convention had been called, and the designs of those who called it. In this address the organization of a distinctive political party was declared to be in violation of the wishes of the great body of the Abolitionists, as had been shown by the unanimous votes of the State societies of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The silence of the executive committee of the national society, and the advocacy of the "Emancipator," its organ, were both sharply criticised. They thus closed their address: "For the honor and purity of our enterprise, we trust that the Abolitionists of the several States will refuse to give any countenance to the proposed convention at Albany. Let their verdict be recorded against it as unauthorized, unnecessary, and premature. Let the meeting be insignificant and local, and thus rendered harmless."

The convention assembled at the time and place designated. Six States only were represented. Of its one hundred and twenty-one delegates, one hundred and four were from the State of New York. Alvan Stewart was made president. He was an early Abolitionist, having witnessed and realized, while

visiting the South, in 1816, the cruelties, corruptions, and crimes necessarily involved in the system of chattel slavery. He was sincere and tender-hearted. The cruelties of the system seemed to affect him more than its crimes; and he would paint its horrors in language that none who listened to him could ever forget. One that well knew this remarkable man who rendered such effective service to the antislavery cause in its days of weakness and trial, thus describes him: "His conceptions were grand, his sweep of thought majestic, his language unique, his illustrations graphic, and his knowledge varied and minute." He had been a Whig, and one of the favorite orators of the party. A good lawyer, a clear-sighted politician, accustomed to deal with practical affairs, he early saw the necessity of assaulting slavery as a political evil by the use of the ballot. He came to that convention to aid, if possible, in giving form and shape to that idea.

Though small in numbers and somewhat local in its composition, its members were conscientious, earnest, and determined. After full debate and deliberate consideration, it was resolved by the small majority of eleven votes to present candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency. For the former James G. Birney was selected, and for the latter Thomas Earle of Pennsylvania.

Born in Kentucky, reared and educated under the slave system, Mr. Birney was an hereditary owner of slaves. He embraced the antislavery reform from the deepest convictions of its justice, and gave freedom to his own slaves from the purest motives. He sacrificed property, political preferment, social standing, home and kindred, that he might serve a cause that could give him neither fortune nor favor. A gentleman with dignity of manner and varied culture, a sound lawyer, remarkably well versed in constitutional and international law, he wrote and spoke with grace and vigor. He was a prudent counsellor, and inclined to moderate action. Conciliatory in tone and manner, he was firm and fearless in maintaining his convictions of right. Thoroughly comprehending the vitality of the slave system and the tenacity of slaveholders, he foresaw and predicted the terrible convulsions

into which the Slave Power would plunge the country. He believed that the exercise of the elective franchise was binding upon all. To possess and not to use the right to vote he declared to be "inconsistent with the duty of Abolitionists under the Constitution."

Mr. Earle was a native of Massachusetts, of Quaker ancestry and sentiments. A law student under John Sergeant of Philadelphia, and editor and author of several papers and books, he occupied quite a prominent public position in his adopted city and State. Though acting with the Democratic party, he was an active member of the old Pennsylvania Abolition Society. Laboring for twenty years for constitutional reform in his State, he was a prominent member of the convention called for that purpose, of which, says Whittier, he was the "recognized author and originator." In that convention, his political friends proposed "white suffrage" as the basis of representation; but, though by so doing he sacrificed all hopes of political preferment, he took and firmly maintained the doctrine of human rights, without distinction of color or race.

Such were the men selected by the Liberty party as its candidates, as it entered the arena of national politics, and for the first time solicited the suffrages of the humane and liberty-loving for the highest offices of the government. Its vote, however, was but small. Of the two million and a half of the votes cast at that election, its candidates received less than seven thousand.

But small as was the vote, the friends of this new mode of action were encouraged. Soon after the election the national committee of correspondence issued an address to the friends of the oppressed in the United States. It was written by Alvan Stewart, and bore the marks of his enthusiastic and hopeful spirit. It congratulated the friends of the slave that humanity, as a new element in political action, had been found; that the voice of stern justice was beginning to speak from a new place; and that the power to overthrow slavery had been discovered in "the terse literature of the ballot-box."



The Liberty party received into its ranks, in 1841, an important accession in the person of Salmon P. Chase. Mr. Chase had, as early as 1837, acted as counsel for a woman claimed as a fugitive slave, and also for James G. Birney, who had been indicted for the offence of harboring a slave. In very elaborate arguments he had maintained that the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 was unwarranted by the Constitution of the United States; that Congress had no power to impose any duties in fugitive-slave cases upon State magistrates; and that slavery was local, and depended on State law for existence. Like several other antislavery men in Ohio he had voted for General Harrison. But the course of Mr. Tyler had convinced him that the cause of emancipation had little to hope from the Whigs, whose action was modified, if not controlled, by their slaveholding members at the South. He united with others in calling an antislavery State convention, in December, 1841, at Columbus. It was strong in numbers, talent, and character. Samuel Lewis presided, and Leicester King, a gentleman of large influence, was nominated for governor. An address, written and reported by Mr. Chase, and unanimously adopted by the convention, was issued. It was a full exposition of the powers and duties of the people, and of the principles and purposes of the Liberty party. It was, perhaps, the best presentation of the subject that had then been made. No previous paper had so clearly defined the province of political action, its limitations and prospective results. It was extensively circulated, and exerted considerable influence in giving cohesion and impulse to the new organization.

Other conventions, State, county, and district, were held. The men and presses that had inaugurated this mode of effort exhibited activity and zeal, accessions were made, and the party steadily increased. Among these conventions was one held in Peterboro', New York, in January, 1842. It issued an address to the slaves of the United States, written by Gerrit Smith. In justification of this act it was proclaimed that the slave has the right "to all the words of consolation, encouragement, and advice which his fellow-men can convey to him." Slaves were specially enjoined to use no violence, and to cherish

no vindictive feelings towards their oppressors. They were urged to pray to Him who hears the sighing of the prisoner to grant them speedy deliverance, and never let bribes, menaces, or sufferings obtain their consent to violate God's law. They were told, however, to have no conscience against the inexpressibly wicked law which forbade them to read, and that the slave who had learned to read "has already conquered half the difficulty in getting to Canada, and the slave who has learned to read the Bible has learned the way to heaven." They were cheered by the declaration that the decree of God had gone forth that slavery should continue to be "tortured even unto death," and that their redemption drew nigh. They were counselled to seek liberty by flight, and assured that the Abolitionist knows no more grateful employment than that of carrying the escaping slave to Canada.

A national convention of the Liberty party was held at Buffalo in August, 1843. There were nearly a thousand delegates, every free State but New Hampshire being represented. It was a convention of character and integrity, embracing among its leaders men of large ability and influence. This was freely accorded by those who did not belong to it by either association or sympathy. Says Stephen S. Foster, who was present, though not a member: "It was in my judgment the most earnest, devoted, patriotic, and practically intelligent political body which has ever met on this continent." A committee was appointed to report a series of resolutions embodying the principles and policy of the party. An unsuccessful effort was made in this committee, supported by Mr. Chase and opposed by Mr. Goodell, to postpone the nominations till the spring of next year. This committee reported a platform in which were clearly enunciated the purposes of the organization. An effort was made in the committee by John Pierpont, but successfully opposed there by Mr. Chase, to report a declaration "to regard and treat the third clause of the Constitution, whenever applied to the case of a fugitive slave, as utterly null and void; and consequently as forming no part of the Constitution of the United States whenever we are called upon or sworn to support it." Failing in the committee, he

introduced it into the convention with the startling question: "Shall we obey the dead fathers or the living God?" The convention responded to his appeal, and adopted the resolution by a decisive majority.

The convention nominated for President James G. Birney, then residing in Michigan, and for Vice-President Thomas Morris of Ohio. With its platform and candidates the Liberty party went into the canvass of 1844 with zeal and energy. A series of local and State conventions was held, at which its platform and candidates were earnestly commended for the suffrages of the country. Among these conventions was one in Philadelphia on the 22d of February, 1844. It appointed a committee, of which Professor Charles D. Cleaveland of that city was chairman, to prepare an address to the country. This address from the graceful and eloquent pen of its chairman was an admirable presentation of the principles and purposes of the party. It was largely circulated. Thus supported the Liberty party cast more than sixty thousand votes, had the balance of power in the States of New York and Michigan, and held in its hands the fate of that memorable contest.

Though the immediate annexation of Texas followed at once the election of Mr. Polk, the leaders of the Liberty party felt justified in their course of action, and still continued their appeals to the people to join their organization and sustain their line of policy. In the spring of 1845 a convention of the party, designed to embrace all who were in favor of continuing an uncompromising warfare against the usurpations of the Slave Power, and who were determined to use all constitutional and honorable means to effect the extinction of slavery in their respective States, and its reduction to its constitutional limits in the United States, was called to meet at Cincinnati, and was held on the 11th and 12th of June, about two thousand persons being present. It was strong in character as well as in numbers. It issued an address written by Salmon P. Chase, in which the evils of slavery and the crimes of the Slave Power were presented with great comprehensiveness and eloquence. The conditions of ultimate triumph were declared to be "unswerving fidelity to our principles; unalterable de-



termination to carry these principles to the ballot-box at every election; inflexible and unanimous support of those and only those who are true to these principles." Recognizing the moral as well as political character of the struggle in which they were enlisted, and confident of the favor of God, the address said: "We are resolved to go forward, knowing that our cause is just, trusting in God. We ask you to go forward with us, invoking his blessing who sent his Son to redeem mankind. With him are the issues of all events. He can and he will disappoint all the devices of oppression. He can, and we trust he will, make our instrumentality efficient for the redemption of our land from slavery, and for the fulfilment of our fathers' pledge in behalf of freedom, before him and before the world."

In October a convention of the friends of freedom in the Eastern and Middle States was held in Boston. An address was issued appealing to the people by every consideration of religion, humanity, and patriotism to exert all their powers for the overthrow of slavery. "Your homes and your altars," it said, "your honor and good name, are at stake. The slave in his prison stretches his manacled hand towards you, imploring your aid. A cloud of witnesses surround you. The oppressed millions of Europe beseech you to remove from their pathway to freedom the reproach and stumbling-block of democratic slavery. From the damp depths of dungeons, from the stake and the scaffold, where the martyrs of liberty have sealed their testimony with their blood, solemn and awful voices call upon you to make the dead letter of your republicanism a living truth. Join with us, then, fellow-citizens. Slavery is mighty; but it can be overthrown. In the name of God and humanity let us bring the mighty ballot-box of a kingless people to bear upon it."

Mr. Chase and other leading men of the party confidently expected large accessions to their ranks as the result of these conventions and from that sense of outrage and injury, felt by large numbers at the North, inflicted by the Texas scheme. They were, however, disappointed; for the Liberty party contained within itself the seeds, if not of its own dissolution, at

least of dissensions and divisions, and there were marked differences of sentiment on other subjects, growing out of former political and ecclesiastical connections, which could not but reveal themselves in their new relations.

These differences manifested themselves in a very marked degree in a State convention in New York during the same summer. Among the leading points of these differences was their divergence of views upon the Constitution of the United States; some regarding it an antislavery instrument, and some maintaining the exactly opposite opinion. Before the disruption of the American Antislavery Society the former view had been entertained by some, from which they deduced the conclusion that slavery was unconstitutional as well as morally wrong. In 1844 Mr. Goodell had published a work entitled, "Views of American Constitutional Law in its Bearings upon American Slavery." It had a large circulation and exerted considerable influence. Soon after its publication Lysander Spooner, a lawyer of Boston, published the "Unconstitutionality of Slavery." It was a work of decided ability and acuteness, and, though by many deemed fallacious in its reasonings and conclusions, exerted no small influence upon the popular mind, large numbers of the Liberty party accepting its positions. These causes soon began in a clear and unmistakable manner to reveal their presence, by the diverse modes of action and policies to which they gave rise. Of course these divided counsels and inharmonious efforts hindered the growth of the party and greatly diminished its influence.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### MOBS. — ANTISLAVERY ACTIVITIES. — WOMEN'S FAIRS.

Riot at Cincinnati. — Cowardice of the City Government. — Manly Stand of Dr. Bailey. — Riot in Philadelphia. — Riots in New Bedford, Nantucket, and Portland. — Riotous Demonstration in the North. — The Tone of the South. — Divisions among Abolitionists. — New Organization. — Old Organization. — Antislavery Fairs. — Liberty Bell. — Address to the Slaves. — Address to President Tyler. — One hundred Conventions. — Thomas P. Beach. — Visit of Abolitionists to England. — Henry C. Wright. — Case of John L. Brown. — Decrease of Antislavery Societies. — Spread of Antislavery Sentiments. — The Impending Struggle.

THE mob spirit seemed to culminate in the murder of Lovejoy and in the burning of Pennsylvania Hall. Subsiding for a time, it burst forth afresh in 1841. In September of that year a terrible riot broke out in Cincinnati against Abolitionists and the colored people. For two days the mob set all law at defiance, and held undisputed sway over the city. Citizens from Kentucky largely participated in the outrage, declaring that they had been sent for, and that there were hundreds who were ready to come and rid the city of negroes and Abolitionists. Bands of armed men patrolled its streets searching for negroes, sending the men to prison under the pretence of protection, leaving the women and children defenceless, to be subsequently outraged and treated with the greatest indignity. Slaveholders hunted among them for runaway slaves, and lawless violence ran riot. The office of the "Philanthropist" was attacked, and its press was destroyed. A colored meeting-house and several dwellings were demolished, the city authorities doing little to prevent, or even restrain, the outrageous proceedings. But, more significant of the spirit that ruled the hour, and indicating pretty clearly where the responsibility for the riot rested, a public meeting was held,



the mayor presiding, at which resolutions were adopted, that every negro escaping from his master should be given up; that the negroes should be disarmed; and that the law of 1807, requiring free negroes to give bonds, should be enforced. The meeting also denounced the Abolitionists, and assured their "Southern brethren" that these resolutions were adopted in good faith, and that they would be executed.

The immediate cause of the riot, it was stated by the "Philanthropist," was the presence of men from Kentucky, who precipitated these scenes of violence upon the city and participated largely in them. But subsequent revelations disclosed the fact that they were greatly encouraged, if not invited, by some of the business men, who had been threatened with loss of trade if the nuisance of free negroes and Abolitionists was not abated, and who took this method of assuring their Southern brethren of their soundness; so that there was far too much of truth in the humiliating confession, which was then made, that Cincinnati was but "a conquered province of Kentucky." A few antislavery men advised Dr. Bailey to suspend its publication. To such advice he nobly replied: "No, friends, the 'Philanthropist' must be published. The war has become now openly a war against free discussion, and shall we give back? We are not ambitious to be a martyr, life is precious; but we are willing, Heaven helping us, to suffer all things rather than turn traitor to a cause we have long advocated, — a cause identified with the highest interests of man, — a cause which God approves, and which he will conduct to a glorious issue, whatever the fate of its advocates." This bold and manly stand taken by Dr. Bailey extorted the admiration and excited the sympathy of those who differed widely from him in their views. Mr. Garrison sent him a hundred dollars to aid him in re-establishing his press, and wrote him a letter urging him not to yield to the violence of his enemies or the timid counsels of his friends.

On the 1st of August, 1842, the colored people of Philadelphia attempted a celebration in commemoration of West India emancipation. Their procession was assailed by a mob made up largely of Irish laborers. Deeds of violence and blood-

shed were enacted. A public hall and a church were burned, private houses were demolished, and many families were reduced to abject penury. While the buildings were in flames the fire companies refused to make the necessary effort for their extinguishment; and for three days the mob received but little check from the city authorities, who, as on a previous occasion, either from timidity or base connivance, shrank from a proper performance of their duties. Adding insult to injury, they proclaimed the colored people and their friends responsible for the very outrages of which they were but the victims. A decision of the Court of Sessions gave color to the gravest suspicions concerning the motives of this conduct. A public hall, which had been erected by the colored people for temperance and religious purposes solely, was ordered to be demolished on a petition representing that there was well-grounded apprehension that it would be burned by the mob, and that it was therefore a nuisance. So overawed by, if not in sympathy with, these outrages, committed at the bidding of the Slave Power, were the civic authorities of one of the leading cities of the Union.

Nor was this spirit of lawless violence confined to Pennsylvania. Similar demonstrations occurred elsewhere. Within a few days of these occurrences, antislavery meetings were broken up in New Bedford and Nantucket in Massachusetts. Early in September, Stephen S. Foster was mobbed at an antislavery meeting in Portland, and was with great difficulty rescued from the hands of the rioters. In other places there were similar outbreaks; meetings were broken up; halls injured, persons wounded, and the spirit of riot and misrule too generally prevailed.

While the North was thus disturbed and disgraced by these riotous assemblages of Southern sympathizers, the peace of the South was seldom broken by such demonstrations. For the same Power that held in bonds the body of the black man inthrallled the spirit of the white man. Few were bold enough there to express words of sympathy for the slave, or to question the authority of the master. To be suspected even of pity for the one, or lack of fealty to the other, was to be in danger.

An enforced and submissive silence there reigned, seldom broken by pulpit or press, by public denunciation, or even by private expostulation. But if perchance heart or conscience did impel utterances, and the feelings of humanity did gain the mastery, then the swift hand of violence was sure to fall.

When the American Antislavery Society was rent in twain in 1840, the hope had been expressed by John G. Whittier that the members of the old and new organizations, if they could not walk together in unity, could co-operate with each other for the common cause. Catholic and charitable in his views, he recognized the high character, earnestness, and services of such men as Garrison, Phillips, May, Quincy, and Francis Jackson, and such women as Mrs. Child, Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. Mott, the Grimkés, and Abby Kelley, of the old organization, as well as those of such men as the Tappans, Birney, Goodell, Leavitt, Gerrit Smith, Alvan Stewart, Myron Holley, General Fessenden, and Samuel E. Sewall, of the new organization, to which he belonged; and he desired that the influence of neither should be lost to the cause. But these hopes were not destined to be realized. Divided into two rival, if not hostile, organizations, they too often wasted their forces in mutual criminations and recriminations, which should have been combined against the common foe.

The American and Foreign Antislavery Society and its affiliated societies contained many men of eminence and worth. Many of their members were connected with Christian churches and benevolent associations. Fully aware of the moral power of these organizations over the opinions and convictions of the people, the latter sought both to absolve them from all complicity with slavery and to persuade them to bear their testimony against it. In church conference and convocation, in missionary meetings and on anniversary occasions, they pleaded the cause of humanity as an essential part of the gospel itself. Nor were their efforts without avail, though the full results they aimed at were not secured. Many churches adopted their views, antislavery churches were in some instances formed, and missionary and benevolent asso-



ciations were organized on the basis of no fellowship with slaveholders; the most important of them being the American Missionary Association, which was formed in 1846.

Believing, too, in the necessity of political action, they constituted an important and controlling element of the Liberty party. In the use of such means, in addition to their associated efforts in connection with the new organization and its branches, they were active and vigilant in their attempts to infuse their sentiments through these channels of influence into the public mind. Nor were these varied efforts without corresponding results, in no degree to be measured by the number and direct efficiency of the societies which were formed or kept alive. The character and influence of these men in their other relations of life, domestic, social, and ecclesiastical, were often, without doubt, more effective and diffusive than their action in these distinctive and associated efforts.

The Abolitionists who adhered to the American Antislavery Society after the separation, claiming that their platform was as wide as the world and as broad as humanity, and that they stood aloof from all political associations and all sectarian biases, asserted that it was their task to enlighten the public mind and awaken the public conscience. Believing that slavery could not be abolished until a change was wrought in the popular mind and heart, they proclaimed it to be their business, in the words of Edmund Quincy, "to sound forever the tale of the wrongs of the slave, and their own guilt in the ears of the people, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear. Our accents may sometimes seem to be lost in the roar of the world's business or of politics, but their still small voice will make itself heard in the secret chambers of the heart. We may never be numerous; but we shall be always enough to make the general conscience uneasy, until it has purified the nation of its guilt. Our conflict is one in which success is not in proportion to the numbers, but to the faithfulness, of those who engage in it." To the task of carrying into effect these plans, and of endeavoring to make these benign and lofty aspirations realities, they devoted themselves with unflagging resolution. If their forms of expression and

modes of action do not always command assent, few will be found to withhold from them the meed of an earnest zeal and an honest purpose.

By the labors of their few but earnest presses, of their eloquent orators, by their conventions in city and country, by meetings in church and hall, they endeavored to scatter broadcast the seeds of living truth, the indestructible principles of human rights. Openly welcoming women to their ranks, they were cheered and sustained by the presence, sympathy, and hearty co-operation of a circle of ladies of Boston and vicinity of culture and social position, of stainless purity and active philanthropy, who rendered, by presence and purse, speech and pen, essential service to the cause. Among the agencies employed with signal success was that of Fairs. The first was held in Boston, December 16, 1834, under the lead of Mrs. Ellis Gray Loring, Mrs. Lydia Maria Child, and a few others of kindred sympathies. As the Abolitionists were then shut out from the halls and churches of Boston, they were compelled to hold it at the office of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society on Washington Street. Held in behalf of an unpopular cause, that often subjected its advocates and supporters to social proscription and insult, and in most unattractive quarters, it was deemed a success, although the sum-total of its receipts was but three hundred and sixty dollars.

The next was the year of mobs, the black year on the calendar of Boston, when its men of property and standing were not above the outrage of breaking up a meeting of antislavery women, and of assaulting a young man whose only offence was fidelity to the oppressed. To hold an antislavery fair at such a time was a hazardous experiment. The Female Antislavery Society, which had been, a few weeks before, mobbed and driven from its room, adopted and resolved to hold it, although no hall could be procured, and it was not deemed safe to advertise it. Henry Chapman offered to them his private dwelling, and though the colored people did not dare to attend, for fear that their presence might increase the danger, it was measurably successful, and its managers were encouraged. These Fairs gradually increased in interest and

success until the seventh, in 1840, yielded the sum of two thousand dollars. Such an advance had been made that in 1841 they were enabled to procure a large and attractive hall, and secure from home and foreign contributions a fine display of articles of fancy and utility. Although a cloud of opprobrium still rested upon the cause and its friends, persons in the more fashionable circles began to extend their presence and patronage. During this year, too, they were specially gratified by a visit from Lord Morpeth of England, afterward Earl of Carlisle and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, who thus gave expression of his sympathy for the object of their efforts.

Faneuil Hall was asked for and obtained, and these annual gatherings were appropriately held in the Cradle of Liberty for many years. Valuable contributions were received from abroad, especially from the antislavery women of England, Scotland, and Ireland. They were visited and patronized by increasing numbers, and were continued until slavery finally disappeared. Their receipts contributed largely to the support of the American Antislavery Society, and of its organ the "Antislavery Standard." What became an important feature was the publication of a volume entitled "The Liberty Bell," of which fifteen numbers appeared. It was edited by Mrs. Maria W. Chapman, and received the contributions, in prose and verse, of many of the most gifted writers in England and America. Its very list of contributors was an assurance that the volumes which contained their writings were replete with conclusive reasonings, glowing thoughts, and tender appeals which could not fail to affect the thoughts and feelings of the people, and help forward the sacred cause.

While in no other place except Boston did Fairs become an "institution," they were held in various parts of the country. They were early held in Philadelphia under the direction and impulse of Lucretia Mott, Mary Grew, and others like minded. They, too, were more or less frequently resorted to in other cities and towns, not only in New England, but in the Middle and Western States. Indeed, among the multiplied agencies that were adopted during those years of weary toil to effect the desired change in the public sentiment, this agency was often



and in many places put in requisition. Slight record can be made of the labors of these noble women, and their names may never be known to the lowly ones for whom they toiled. But on the tablets of their own souls were inscribed in enduring characters these lessons of love and self-sacrifice, truth and trust, which made them wiser and better, however much or however little their efforts may have advanced the common cause. May not, however, their patient and persistent labors have prepared them and stimulated others of their countrywomen for those exhibitions of sublime and heroic devotion, at home and in the camps and hospitals of the army, which so signalized the late civil war?

Among other instrumentalities employed by the members of the old organization was the adoption of two addresses, both from the pen of Mr. Garrison, one to the slaves of the South, and the other to President Tyler on the occasion of his visit to Massachusetts at the completion of the Bunker Hill monument. The slaves were assured that the word had gone forth that they should be delivered from their chains. They were invited to transform themselves from things into men by flight from their masters; and the pledge was sacredly given that they should find succor and protection. "If you come to us," said the address, "and are hungry, we will feed you; if thirsty, we will give you drink; if naked, we will clothe you; if sick, we will minister to your necessities; if in prison, we will visit you; if you need a hiding-place from the face of the pursuer, we will provide one that even blood-hounds will not scent out."

President Tyler was requested to liberate his slaves. He was reminded that, though he occupied the highest office in the land, subscribed to the Declaration of Independence, believed in the Christian religion, and was then on a visit to celebrate "the memories of those who bled and died in the cause of human liberty," he was "yet a slaveholder." He was reminded of the influence which such a beneficent example as the emancipation of his own slaves would exert toward the emancipation of three millions held in bondage, and they implored him to perform that great duty. "It might," said the address, "subject you temporarily to the ridicule of the heartless, the

curse of the profane, the contempt of the vulgar, the scorn of the proud, the rage of the selfish, the hostility of the powerful ; but it would assuredly secure to you the applause and admiration of the truly great and good, and render your name illustrious to the latest posterity." Such advice from despised Abolitionists President Tyler of course disdained to follow. Had he accepted it, however, and acted up to its benign precepts, he would never have linked his name so indissolubly with the Texas iniquity ; he would have saved his character from the taint of treason, and himself from being remembered as the only traitor President.

Another instrumentality which they adopted was the holding a hundred conventions throughout the free States, mainly in the Northwest, at which one or more of their popular orators were present.

Sometimes that oppression which maketh a man mad moved from their propriety the friends of the oppressed and those who labored for his redemption. His sad fate and cruel wrongs, the indifference of the people, and the coldness of the churches during these years, did not a little to embitter Abolitionists and impel them to the utterance of words and the adoption of measures which were neither wise nor in harmony with the very doctrine of equal rights of which they were such sturdy defenders. Especially was this true of some of that class which felt constrained to come out from the churches, and to separate themselves from the political parties of their day. Impatient at what they regarded the wicked silence of the pulpit concerning the wrongs of the slave, and provoked at their own general exclusion from the Christian temples of the land, in which they sought to plead his cause, they sometimes entered those sanctuaries unbidden, and, in the presence of congregations assembled for religious worship, undertook themselves to supply the lack of service of those who, professing to hold the poorest of men their brethren, children of a common Father, had no plea for the bondman, no rebuke for his oppressor.

Among the most prominent and persistent of those who adopted this policy were Stephen S. Foster and Thomas P. Beach. The latter entered the meeting-houses of the Friends

in Lynn and of the Baptists in Danvers, was forcibly ejected, arrested, and fined for a violation of the law against the disturbance of religious worship. In default of his fine, which he would neither pay himself nor allow his friends to pay, he was sent to the Newburyport jail, where he lay three months. He published there a little paper called "The Voice from the Jail," which increased the popular sympathy in his behalf, and made the shortcomings of the churches more apparent. But, though Mr. Beach was a man of character and culture, unquestioned integrity and conscientiousness, he could not but fail to convince many, even among Abolitionists, of the wisdom of his course, or the propriety of such modes of action, though adopted for a good purpose.

Several of their leading advocates visited England and there pleaded the cause, arraiguing their country and its institutions, its political parties and sectarian organizations, as recreant to the cause of freedom and the claims of humanity. Nor were they and their British coadjutors any less ready to criticise and censure the shortcomings which there met their eye. The prominent leaders of the Anti-Corn-Law League were in close and friendly correspondence with Calhoun and McDuffie, hailing these champions of slavery as distinguished friends of free trade, and they denounced the inconsistency of recognizing "the enemies of personal liberty as the friends of commercial liberty." They found, too, the Free Church of Scotland receiving contributions from the slaveholding churches of the South, and they demanded that they should return the price of blood. Henry C. Wright was especially persistent, by voice and pen, in his reiterated demands to "send back the blood-stained money."

Though the money was not sent back, and Southern co-operation in the cause of free trade was still welcomed, there was manifested a growing interest in the English mind on the subject of their mission. Nor was this increase due to anti-slavery efforts alone. As often before and since, the slaveholders themselves added to its intensity. Among their doings which then excited deep feeling were the trial, conviction, and sentence to death, in South Carolina, of John L. Brown, for



the sole offence of aiding a female slave to escape. When the news reached England, Lord Brougham brought the subject before the House of Lords. A memorial, signed by Rev. William Jay, to the inhabitants of the United States, was published. The ministers and office-bearers of Christian churches, and benevolent societies in Lancashire and London addressed a memorial to the churches of South Carolina, and to Americans generally. It was signed by thirteen hundred of the most eminent of the ministers and elders, among whom was the venerable Clarkson. Petitions were sent from England to the governor of South Carolina, praying for the release of Brown. A feeling of horror and indignation was felt and freely expressed at the enormity of such a penalty for such an offence. Similar though far less feeling was exhibited in the United States, but it was owing mainly to British efforts that the governor was induced to commute the sentence.

By these and other modes of action the leading and active members of the antislavery societies prosecuted their work, sometimes with and sometimes without their aid. In earnest to secure the object in view, and regarding organizations as only means to an end, they did not cease to seek the end, though that means might be wanting or ineffective for their purpose. For, as distinctive organizations, these societies soon began to diminish in number and efficiency. This was admitted, as early as 1844, by Parker Pillsbury, in the "Herald of Freedom." It was then said by him that they had but a name to live, that "the annual meetings had been a disgrace to humanity, and a scandal to the antislavery cause." Mr. Pillsbury was apt to take gloomy views of affairs, and sometimes to express himself in extravagant and exaggerated language. And yet there is no doubt whatever that at that time they had largely diminished in numbers. At the time of the disruption it was estimated that there were nearly two thousand antislavery societies in the United States, with a membership of some two hundred thousand. Immediately after the organization of the American and Foreign Antislavery Society, auxiliary societies were also formed. But they were never very effective, and most of their members labored for the

common cause through political and ecclesiastical associations. Indeed, within five years of the disruption large numbers of antislavery societies had ceased to exist, and their membership had greatly diminished. Some of them, however, especially the American, New England, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Pennsylvania societies were then strong and effective.

But the decrease of antislavery societies, and the diminution of the numbers, interest, and zeal of many that remained, were no indication of the decline of antislavery ideas, but an evidence, rather, that the antislavery cause was assuming larger dimensions, and that the sympathies and views of many found expression in other forms and by other modes of action. The startling issues growing out of the Texas plot, the increasing aggressions of the Slave Power, brought the various questions pertaining to slavery to the hearts and homes of hundreds of thousands who had heretofore given little heed to abolition movements. They broadened and deepened the public interest, so that the conflicts of opinion and the adoption of policies passed, in a large degree, from the arena and control of antislavery societies to the wider domain of general debate and political combinations. Matters involving both slavery and antislavery were no longer mere problems of civil polity and reform, to be calmly considered in the study or on the platform as abstract questions of right and wrong merely; but they became the momentous issues of the hour, instinct with life and importance, involving both peril and guilt on the one hand, duty and safety on the other. They forced themselves upon the attention of statesmen and into the assemblages of the people; they entered the halls of State legislatures and the chambers of Congress. They appealed to the public eye and ear in the columns of the press, in the pulpit, and in meetings of religious assemblies, and at the hustings of political parties. Fiction made them the theme of her most successful efforts, and poetry consecrated to them the magic of its numbers. And thus the subject which had been discussed only by the few became the theme of the many, and that which had been confined to scattered circles overspread the land, until that land trembled under the tread of armies and was reddened with the blood of civil war.

## CHAPTER XL.

### NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS.

Meeting of the American Antislavery Society in 1842. — Debate on the Issue of No Union with Slaveholders. — Meeting of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society. — Protest against the Constitution by Mr. Foster. — Mr. Garrison's Proposition. — Meeting of the American Antislavery Society in 1844. — The Doctrine of No Union with Slaveholders adopted. — Protests. — Address to the Abolitionists. — Letter of Francis Jackson. — Gerrit Smith's Letter to John G. Whittier. — Replies. — Disunion Policy adopted.

IN tracing the history of the antislavery struggle and in forming an estimate of the utterances and proposed measures of the men engaged in it, it should never be lost sight of that they were necessarily ignorant of much which is now seen clearly. What, therefore, may now with present lights seem incongruous and extravagant would very likely appear eminently legitimate and proper, did the critic of to-day have no more facts within his reach than did they who, amid its darkness and threatening dangers, were grappling with the momentous problem a generation ago.

After the disruption of the American Antislavery Society, those who adhered to the original organization evinced a more determined opposition to political action than ever. Especially was this true of a small and active body of those who had accepted the extreme doctrines of non-resistance. They were not only opposed to acting with existing political parties, either with or without antislavery pledges, but to the formation of any organization for the purpose of such action. They assumed that personal consistency and duty to the slave required that they should not give voluntary support to the government by holding office themselves, or by voting for others for that purpose. Some were in favor of a dissolution of the Union, and others were fast tending in that direction.



The society was to hold its annual meeting in New York in May, 1842. Mr. Garrison, in urging a full attendance, suggested that among the questions coming up for consideration, the first in importance would be one concerning "the duty of making the repeal of the union between the North and the South the grand rallying-point, until it be accomplished or slavery cease to pollute our soil." Several of the New York presses commented upon this declaration in language calculated to excite popular violence, and Judge Noah charged the grand jury to indict the agitators if such discussions tended to a breach of the peace. But neither the comments of the press nor the charge of the judge prevented a free and full discussion of that question. A resolution was adopted recommending voting Abolitionists to submit to candidates for office the question : Are you in favor of the abrogation of every provision in the Constitution and the laws of the United States requiring the aid of the people or their agents in holding human beings in slavery ?

To a resolution setting forth that inasmuch as neither the people of the United States nor the Abolitionists had ever asked for the abrogation of the slaveholding features of the Constitution, there was no reasonable ground for asking for a dissolution of the Union, Henry C. Wright offered as a substitute that the cause of human rights does imperatively demand this dissolution. Upon this resolution and substitute there sprang up an earnest and able debate, which ran through two days, in which Mr. Wright, Wendell Phillips, Abby Kelley, Charles Lenox Remond, Thomas Earle, and Ellis Gray Loring participated. They were not, however, ready for action, and the resolution and substitute were laid upon the table. But at the eleventh annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-slavery Society, in 1843, a resolution was reported by Wendell Phillips, asserting that no Abolitionist could consistently demand less than "a dissolution of the union between Northern freedom and Southern slavery, as essential to the abolition of the one and the preservation of the other." This resolution was amended, on motion of Mr. Garrison, so as to read that the compact which exists between the North and the

South is "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell," involving both parties in atrocious criminalities, and that it should be immediately annulled.

At the twelfth annual meeting of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society, Stephen S. Foster presented a protest against the Constitution of the United States, and against the union of the Northern and Southern States, with the reasons for this extreme measure fully enumerated. In the preamble was set forth the declaration that the officers and members of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society "now publicly abjure our allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and the Union, and place the broad seal of our reprobation upon this unnatural and unholy alliance between liberty and slavery." The obligations of the Union were declared to be utterly null and void; the pledge was given to seek its peaceful dissolution; and the friends of freedom in the North were invited thereafter to vote for repeal, instead of casting their votes for Abolitionists for office.

Mr. Foster was followed by Mr. Garrison, who also presented a preamble embodying the same propositions in briefer and more concise form, closing with a resolution declaring in substance that the national compact was in principle and practice an insupportable despotism; from its inception, before God, null and void; and that it was the right and duty of the friends of impartial liberty to withdraw their allegiance, and effect, if possible, its overthrow by peaceful revolution. These resolutions were discussed with great earnestness, the discussion being held in the evening, in the State House. In both Faneuil Hall and the capitol the speeches of Garrison, Foster, Phillips, Quincy, and Burleigh in favor of the immediate dissolution of the Union were applauded. But no vote was reached.

The questions of receding from the government, and of placing on the antislavery banners the war-cry of "No union with slaveholders," were carried into the meeting of the American Antislavery Society, in New York, early in May, 1844. On the proposition by Mr. Garrison, the declaration was made, after earnest debate, that "henceforth, until slavery be abol-

ished, the watchword, the rallying cry, the motto on the banner of the American Antislavery Society shall be, "No Union with Slaveholders." The resolution introduced by Mr. Phillips was also adopted, declaring that secession from the government was the duty of every Abolitionist, and that to take office or to vote for another to hold office under the Constitution violated antislavery principles, and made such voter an abettor of the slaveholder in his sin.

This position was not taken by the American Antislavery Society, however, without the most strenuous and persistent opposition. William A. White, then a young, earnest, and active member from Massachusetts, entered his protest, and withdrew his name from the roll of the society. A protest was presented, signed by Ellis Gray Loring, David Lee Child, Joseph Southwick, and others, declaring that this "novel test" prescribed for the members was "intolerant and presumptuous in its spirit and tendency"; that it narrowed the antislavery platform; that it was "not required by enlightened conscience"; was "impracticable," and "calculated justly to impair the character and influence of the society." A protest was also entered by Thomas Earle and Arnold Buffum. They protested on the ground that it was in effect the exclusion of all but non-resistants from the society; that it was a loss of power; that it assumed the province of an ecclesiastical tribunal in settling questions of conscience, not involved in the original design of the society; that it tended to retard the cause of emancipation; and that it proposed to dissolve the American Union without petitioning for a change of the objectionable features of the Constitution.

Two weeks after this position was taken, an address was issued announcing the above action and calling upon the friends of freedom to adopt the policy proposed. It charged that the national compact was formed at the expense of liberty; that it favored a slaveholding oligarchy and an insupportable despotism; that it was at war with God and man; that it could not be innocently supported; and that it deserved to be immediately annulled. In behalf of the society, they called upon their fellow-citizens who believed it to be "right to obey



God rather than man to declare themselves peaceful revolutionists, and to unite with them under the stainless banner of liberty, having for its motto, 'Equal Rights for All,—No Union with Slaveholders!'" "Up," they say, "with the banner of revolution! Not to shed blood, not to injure the person or estate of any oppressor, not by force of arms to resist any law, not to countenance a servile insurrection, not to wield any carnal weapons! No; ours must be a bloodless strife, excepting our blood be shed,—for we aim, as did Christ our leader, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them; to overcome evil with good; to conquer through suffering for righteousness' sake; to set the captive free by the potency of truth." It declined to define or describe the form of government which should succeed the present, leaving that matter for time to determine. But it expressed the opinion that when the people were regenerated and turned from iniquity, when they ceased from oppression and established liberty, what was then fragmentary would in due time be "crystallized and shine like a gem set in the heavens for all coming ages."

Near the close of the month the New England Antislavery Society adopted the same policy, for substantially the same reasons, by nearly a unanimous vote. But, as in New York, this new position was not taken without earnest protests. One signed by William A. White and Richard Hildreth, the historian, and concurred in by George Bradburn, was presented against the adoption of these resolutions. It set forth that consistency required of all persons voting for them an absolute renunciation of all the advantages derived from the government; that the repudiation of the Constitution and the purposed dissolution of the Union did not tend in the slightest degree to peaceful abolition; that abjuration of the Constitution did not relieve those persons so abjuring it of any obligations and responsibilities they were under as citizens, so long as they remained in the country.

A protest was entered, too, by Joseph Southwick, a Boston merchant, and an early and devoted friend of the slave. He protested, for the reason that their adoption impaired the efforts of Abolitionists, protracted the time for the removal of slavery,

contracted the antislavery platform; and he affirmed that he could not live in the country under the present Constitution, and pay taxes for the support of the government, if he adopted them.

In spite, however, of these and other protests, State and local societies hastened to accept and proclaim the new doctrine. Francis Jackson, the president of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society, addressed a long letter to Governor Briggs, asking him to receive his resignation of the office of justice of the peace. In this letter he set forth, at length and in detail, what he deemed to be the demoralizing influences of the provisions of the Constitution which recognized and protected slavery. "To me," he said, "it appears that the virus of slavery, introduced into the Constitution of our body politic by a few slight punctures, has now so pervaded and poisoned the whole system of our national government, that literally there is no health in it. The only remedy that I can see for the disease is to be found in the dissolution of the patient." He avowed that he could no longer give voluntary assistance in holding up the Constitution of the United States, which had become so imbecile for good and so powerful for evil; that he withdrew all allegiance to it; and that "henceforth," he said, "it is dead to me, and I to it."

Several members of the American Antislavery Society not only dissented from this action, but took an early occasion to state their objections. George Bradburn denounced it as "a wild crusade against voting under the national Constitution"; and he announced that he should avail himself of the opportunity to act thereafter with the Liberty party, which he regarded as "the most efficient antislavery instrumentality,—as the grand instrument, indeed, by which the institution of slavery is to be overthrown."

Gerrit Smith, in a letter to John G. Whittier, affirmed that the people of the North were as guilty as the people of the South, because they were more aroused to the wickedness of slavery, and sinned against greater light. He said that the fact that the nation in its national capacity upheld slavery proved nothing against the Constitution. Maintaining that

the Constitution was an antislavery instrument, it needed, he said, but to be administered in consistency with its principles to effectuate the immediate overthrow of the whole system of slavery. He declared it to be "a power in the hands of the people which they cannot fling away without making themselves guilty of ingratitude to God and of treason to the slave." He regarded the Constitution as a shield given by God to be placed over the head of the slave, and a weapon for fighting the battles of the oppressed, which had been murderously wielded on the side of the oppressor; and it is, he said, "a fruit of poor repentance, if now, when our hearts are smitten with a sense of our wrong use of this shield and weapon, we shall, from our study of ease and quiet, from our desire to promote a favorite theory, or from any other cause, throw them away, instead of manfully, courageously, perseveringly, and therefore successfully, putting them to a right use."

But Garrison, Phillips, Burleigh, Adin Ballou, and others replied to all protests and criticisms with their accustomed earnestness and vigor. They persisted in the maintenance and advocacy of the new theories and policy. The parent society and its affiliated associations, having accepted this position, made it thereafter the distinctive feature of their organization, and the most prominent article of their creed. "No Union with Slaveholders" was the motto everywhere emblazoned on their banners. Disunion was their recognized remedy. Other antislavery men of whatever organization were proclaimed to be wanting in an essential element of all true and effective opposition. However earnest and devoted, they were deemed inconsistent, and their labors were regarded as only partial, if not wholly inefficient. This general criticism embraced every class of antislavery men, and every form of antislavery effort. From the adoption of this policy of disunion in 1844, to the opening of the Rebellion, so persistent were they in its promulgation, as the element of all effective effort, that the supporters of slavery seized upon that fact to identify all antislavery men with them, and to characterize all opposition to slavery as disorganizing, revolutionary, and unpa-



triotic. It was indeed a most potent weapon in the hands of the apologists, perpetualists, and propagandists of slavery. Nor did they cease its use until their voices were silenced by the patriotism of the nation, outraged as it was by their own treason or acknowledged complicity with it.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### IMPRISONMENT OF COLORED SEAMEN.

Imprisonment in South Carolina. — Laws of Louisiana. — Resolutions of Massachusetts. — The Governor authorized to appoint Agents to defend Colored Seamen. — Appointment of Mr. Hoar. — Excitement in South Carolina. — Action of Governor Hammond. — Resolutions of South Carolina Legislature. — Fines and Imprisonments imposed upon Persons that defend Negroes. — Indignation at Charleston. — Action of the Authorities. — Mr. Hoar forced to leave the State. — Mr. Hubbard's Mission to New Orleans. — Compelled to leave. — Petitions presented to Congress by Mr. Winthrop. — Reports of Hoar and Hubbard. — Message of the Governor. — Action of the Legislature.

AMONG the aggressive and oppressive measures of the slaveholding States were the arrests and imprisonments, the fines, whippings, and selling into slavery of free colored men, guilty of no offence but entering Southern ports in the prosecution of their lawful callings.

In 1820 South Carolina passed an act to restrain the emancipation of slaves, and to prevent free persons of color from entering the State. This act was followed by several others of like character and with more stringent provisions. These acts bore with great severity upon colored persons employed on board vessels entering her harbors. They were arrested, forcibly taken out of their vessels, and imprisoned. A case was taken into one of the State courts, and a discharge demanded, on the ground that such laws were unconstitutional; but, that court holding the law to be constitutional, an appeal was taken to the highest tribunal of the State. After argument, the court being divided in opinion, the case was suspended, and the prisoners were still held in custody.

The petitions of twenty-six masters of vessels were presented to the Congress of the United States by Mr. Sergeant of Pennsylvania, in the winter of 1823, setting forth that these

acts destroyed the liberty of freemen, interfered with the freedom of navigation and with the employment of seamen. They asked Congress to relieve them from the situation in which these acts placed them by exposing their free colored mariners to unlawful imprisonment, and their vessels to an enormous and unnecessary expense and detention. Congress, however, gave no relief, and South Carolina went on increasing the severity of her statutes and the rigor of their enforcement.

England made formal complaint against these acts, and remonstrated not with that State, but with the national government. The subject was referred to William Wirt, then Attorney-General of the United States; and that eminent jurist, though a native of Virginia and a slaveholder himself, in 1824, pronounced the acts she complained of an infraction of "the Constitution, treaties, and laws of the United States, and incompatible with the rights of all nations in amity with the United States." South Carolina bowed to that decision so far as it applied to foreign nations, but mercilessly enforced those laws against the citizens of her sister States, who sometimes found in her ports that temporary protection on the decks and under the flags of other governments which their own failed to secure. Though one of her most eminent sons, William Johnson, then a judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, held the opinion that these laws "trampled on the Constitution," "implied a direct attack upon the sovereignty of the United States," tended "to a dissolution of the Union," and were "unconstitutional and void," yet she persistently adhered to her illegal, unfriendly, and cruel policy.

Louisiana and some other Southern States followed her pernicious example. For years the merchants, shipmasters, and seamen of Northern States were thus harassed and burdened. These oppressions continuing, petitions were presented, in 1836, to the legislature of Massachusetts, by antislavery men, asking the interposition of the State. Samuel J. May and Samuel E. Sewall appeared before the committee and presented the carefully collected facts bearing upon the subject. No action, however, was taken till 1839, when a series of



resolutions was passed, protesting against laws under which "citizens of this Commonwealth, visiting those States for purposes of business or driven thither by misfortune, often have been and continue to be, though guiltless of crime, cast into prison, subjected to onerous fines, and in many instances sold into slavery." Assuming that it was the paramount duty of Massachusetts to protect her citizens, the governor was authorized to employ a suitable person, whenever any colored citizen of the State was imprisoned in another State on account of complexion or race, to lay the matter before the proper authorities and secure the release of the individual. These resolves, so moderate in language and so reasonable in their demands, were unheeded, and treated with contemptuous neglect.

After patiently waiting three years, the legislature authorized the governor to take suitable measures at the expense of the Commonwealth to procure the discharge of persons held under such laws, and to test their legality before the Supreme Court; but this action secured no practical result. These laws were felt to be more and more oppressive and burdensome, and petitions were presented in 1843, to the legislature, asking the appointment of counsel in the ports of Charleston and New Orleans to act in behalf of their oppressed citizens. The legislature promptly passed resolves authorizing the governor to employ an agent for the ports of Charleston and New Orleans, for a term not exceeding one year, for collecting and transmitting information respecting the number of persons imprisoned without the allegation of a crime, and to prosecute one or more suits, so as to test the legality of these imprisonments. Governor Morton appointed agents for that purpose; but they took no notice of their appointment, or declined to act.

Defeated in all its efforts to secure the protection of its citizens, the legislature, in 1844, authorized the governor to appoint an agent to reside at Charleston, and another to reside in New Orleans, to carry into effect the resolutions of the preceding legislature. Under this authority Governor Briggs appointed for Charleston Samuel Hoar of Concord. Mr.

Hoar was a gentleman of ripe age, of great personal worth and influence, eminent in his profession, having served with much acceptance in both the State and national legislatures. He was by temperament, education, and social position cautious and conservative. He had never been an Abolitionist, but was a supporter and advocate of the colonization scheme.

Accepting this appointment, Mr. Hoar set out on his mission of justice, humanity, and constitutional law. With his daughter, a lady of rare intelligence and excellence of character, he arrived at Charleston on the 28th of November, 1844. On the same day he addressed a communication to the governor of South Carolina, informing him that he had been appointed by the governor of Massachusetts an agent to collect and transmit accurate information respecting the imprisonment of citizens of that Commonwealth, and bring one or more suits in their behalf. The next day Mr. Hoar sought an introduction to the mayor of Charleston, for the purpose of obtaining access to "the records of orders on sentences to imprisonment of our colored seamen or other citizens." But that official was at Columbia, attending a session of the legislature.

James H. Hammond was then governor of South Carolina. His views upon slaveholding were of the most extravagant character. He believed it to be the normal condition of society. In Congress he had shown himself to be its most zealous advocate, and a violent exponent of the most extreme opinions of his State. Reckless alike of the rights of whites and of blacks, he did not hesitate to make this avowal on the floor of the House: "I warn the Abolitionists, — ignorant, infatuated barbarians as they are, — that, if chance shall throw any of them into our hands, they may expect a felon's death." On receiving Mr. Hoar's letter, the governor hastened to communicate it to the legislature. Incensed at what they chose to regard "as part of a deliberate and concerted scheme to subvert the domestic institutions of the Southern States," the legislature promptly adopted a series of resolutions declaring the right of South Carolina to exclude from her territory persons whose presence might be dangerous; denying that free negroes were "citizens of the United States" in the meaning

of the Constitution ; and requesting the governor to "expel the emissary sent by Massachusetts to South Carolina."

Nor did the legislature pause with these declarations. They passed an act to punish by fines, imprisonment, and banishment any person coming within the limits of the State with the intent to disturb or hinder the operation of laws relating to slaves and free persons of color. It also enacted that any resident citizen of the State who should accept any commission for a like purpose should receive a still severer punishment.

As his mission became known, a like feeling of resentment and hostility ran through the State. Charleston was in a ferment of rage. The sheriff called on Mr. Hoar, and said to him : "It is considered a great insult on South Carolina by Massachusetts to send an agent here on such business. The city is highly incensed. You are in great danger, and you had better leave the city as soon as possible." He replied with firmness, that he had been sent by the governor of Massachusetts on lawful business, and he could not consent to leave until he had attempted, at least, to carry out his instructions. The sheriff then read a portion of a letter he had received from the attorney-general, urging the importance of preserving order and deprecating a resort to lynching, which would be "a disgrace to the city." Repeating several times that the excitement was intense, that the people regarded the object of his visit an insult, he advised him to leave at once, as the only means of safety left. But Mr. Hoar was firm in his unwillingness to leave under such circumstances. Other citizens called, with similar representations and counsel.

It was suggested to him by the sheriff, that a case be made up and taken before the Supreme Court, and a decision secured by this means. To this proposition he readily assented ; but, on further reflection and consideration, the sheriff withdrew the offer. Dr. Whitridge, to whom Mr. Hoar had a letter of introduction, also called upon him ; and, though expressing his "unutterable mortification in communicating the state of things existing in Charleston," he felt obliged to apprise him of his danger, and of the necessity of immediate escape. He told him that he had just come from the common council ;



that the people were assembling in groups, and that the best course to be pursued was to take a carriage to his plantation, some twenty miles distant, where they could arrange further movements. But he still firmly declined the proffered aid and advice.

Three gentlemen — one of them a bank president and the others two attorneys of that city, one of whom was Mr. Magrath, a lawyer of eminence, afterward a judge of the United States District Court, and one of the leaders of the Rebellion — called on Mr. Hoar, avowedly for the purpose of inducing him to leave the city. To their urgent request that he should leave, Mr. Hoar replied by stating the lawful nature of his business, and the pressing necessity he was under to perform it. After further conversation, they informed him that they would call again and escort him to the boat. He replied that fighting on his part would be very foolish, that he was too old to run, and they would find him there to be disposed of as they should think proper. When they were about leaving the room, he reminded them that he had a daughter with him; to which Mr. Rose, the bank president, replied: "It is that which creates our embarrassment." While these gentlemen used no violent language, their words and tones indicated that they were determined in their purpose.

He was further embarrassed by the action of the keeper of the hotel. Without intimating to him a desire that he should leave his house, he presented a request to the city government that they would remove him, to save his house from the impending danger. Informed that a story was circulating through the city that he had consented to leave, Mr. Hoar stated to Mr. Rose and his friends that he had given no such consent; and that, if he left the city, it would be because he "must," not because he "would." It was admitted that they had no power to order him away, and that all they could do was to warn him of what was to follow if he should not go. They concurred in assuring him that he had done all he could, and that it was impossible for him to remain longer in the city. "It seemed then," said Mr. Hoar, in his report to the governor of Massachusetts, "that there was but one question for

me to settle ; which was, whether I should walk to a carriage or be dragged to it. Unless I disregarded the statements of friends as well as of foes, and also the preparations which I then saw about me, this, I must conclude, was the only alternative. I could perceive no use to any State, cause, or person in choosing the latter ; and I then, and for the first time, said, ' I will go.' " He entered the carriage pointed out to him, and was driven to the boat " without any tumult or further abuse."

Thus was the accredited agent of Massachusetts expelled from the soil of a sister State, while her colored citizens, guilty of no crime, were still doomed, though in the pursuit of their lawful avocations, to arrests, imprisonments, fines, and, for a second offence, to be sold at public sale as slaves. Thus, too, in violation of the guaranty that " the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the immunities and privileges of citizens of the several States," did South Carolina adhere, not only inflexibly but vauntingly, to her inhuman and lawless policy. Not only did the efforts of Massachusetts to protect her lowly and defenceless sons signally fail, but she found herself powerless either to maintain the rights guaranteed by the Constitution, which she felt herself bound to support, or to vindicate her co-equality among her sister States.

Significant, indeed, were the inquiries with which Mr. Hoar closed the report of his fruitless mission. " Has the Constitution of the United States the least practical validity or binding force in South Carolina ? She prohibits the trial of an action in the tribunals established under the Constitution for determining such cases in which a citizen of Massachusetts complains that a citizen of South Carolina has done him an injury ; saying that she has herself already tried that cause and decided against the plaintiff. She prohibits, not only by her mobs, but by her legislature, the residence of a free white citizen of Massachusetts within the limits of South Carolina whenever she thinks his presence there inconsistent with her policy. Are the other States of the Union to be regarded as the conquered provinces of South Carolina ? "

But South Carolina was not alone in her violent and contumacious course. Henry Hubbard, a lawyer of Western Massa-

chusetts, had been appointed the agent for Louisiana. His arrival in New Orleans threw the city into great excitement. At the outset he was careful to disclaim all connection with abolitionism, or any intention to interfere with slavery or with slaves at the South. The purpose of Massachusetts, he said, was to enable the citizens of that State, imprisoned without crime, to avail themselves of all lawful means for their liberation. In a communication to Governor Mouton he assured him that Massachusetts was simply striving to protect her own citizens, and had done nothing to infringe the right of her sister States. But all these explanations and disclaimers were unavailing. The excitement increased, the murmurs of hostile intent grew louder, and threats of lynching were freely circulated. Everything boded a popular outbreak.

Mr. Hubbard was waited upon by the city recorder, accompanied by Mr. Soulé, afterward United States senator, and urged immediately to leave the city. As he declined compliance with these demands, the recorder, under great excitement, said to him: "It is from no motive but that of humanity that I come to warn you of your danger. If you do not promise to leave the city immediately, your life is not safe this night; and if I should take you into custody, I could not protect you, for they would murder me in a moment. If you stay here another night, your life will certainly be taken." He was assured, too, by Jacob Barker, a native of Massachusetts, but long a citizen of New Orleans, that his life was in imminent peril. Under these circumstances he addressed a letter to the governor of Louisiana, expressing his purpose, now that his mission was fruitless, immediately to leave the State. The law, the government, and the people of Louisiana were against his mission; and Mr. Hubbard returned home, made his report, and resigned his agency.

Thus Louisiana, like South Carolina, acting on the practical assumption that everything must be subordinate to the interests of slavery, did not hesitate to violate both the spirit and the letter of the Constitution; while Massachusetts, believing that the government was designed to secure the blessings of liberty to all, aimed to make it effectual in guarding the rights



of the humblest of her citizens ; but she found herself, under the slavery *regime*, powerless for the protection of her most honored official representatives.

Nor could she look to the national government for the vindication of her rights. That, too, was bestrode by the Slave Power and compelled to do its bidding. An appeal had already been made, and that appeal had been denied. In December, 1842, Mr. Winthrop of Massachusetts had presented a memorial of the citizens of Boston, owners and masters of vessels and others, representing that it was necessary to employ free persons of color in vessels entering the ports of Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and New Orleans ; that these men were frequently taken from their vessels and thrown into prison, greatly to the prejudice of their interests and the detriment of commerce ; and they prayed Congress to grant relief, and render effectual the privileges of citizenship secured by the Constitution.

This memorial had been referred to the Committee on Commerce, and Mr. Winthrop, who evinced in this case deep interest and zeal, had promptly reported that the judiciary alone could give relief from these oppressive laws, and the State alone could repeal them. But the committee reported a series of resolutions, trusting that their adoption by the House would not be without influence in securing for the petitioners, and much more for the seamen in their employ, the redress they demanded. These resolutions pronounced that the seizure and imprisonment in the ports of any State of free colored seamen against whom there was no charge but that of entering such ports in pursuance of their lawful business, and the authorizing of such seizure and imprisonment by State laws, were in contravention of the paramount and exclusive power of the general government to regulate commerce, and were also in direct, positive, and permanent conflict with the express provisions and fundamental principles of the national compact. The House of Representatives, however, under the lead of Cave Johnson of Tennessee, soon thereafter made Postmaster-General, laid those resolutions on the table by a large majority ; and by so doing gave its sanction and encour-

agement to this inhuman, unjust, and unconstitutional State legislation.

Early in the session of 1845 Governor Briggs sent to the legislature Mr. Hoar's report, accompanied by a well-reasoned and temperate message. It was referred to a joint special committee, of which Charles Francis Adams was made chairman. That committee, on the 3d of February, reported resolves concerning the treatment of Samuel Hoar by the State of South Carolina, with a declaration to be adopted as the act of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This declaration clearly set forth the whole case in issue, and justified by indisputable facts and impregnable arguments the course Massachusetts had pursued. With becoming solemnity, as "in the presence of all Christian nations, of the civilized world, and of an omniscient, all-seeing Deity, the final judge of human action," she addressed "each of her sister States," entered her solemn protest, and arraigned South Carolina because the latter had disregarded "the comity acknowledged by all civilized communities," defied "the express stipulations of the Constitution," and refused to submit her action to be adjudged by the Supreme Court of the United States.

This admirable State paper, which was unanimously adopted and sent forth to the country, closed with this firm and dignified enunciation of the purposes of Massachusetts: "She will never relax in her demands of all the rights which belong to her as a State and member of the Union, or in the execution of her utmost energies in support of the undying principles of justice and liberty among men, the base of her social edifice, cemented in the blood of many of its founders, as they are the pride and honor of modern civilization."

This appeal awoke no response and secured no action from the offending States. Their cruel laws still continued to disgrace their statute-books, and Northern freemen were still subjected to their harsh and humiliating operation. Nor was there any relaxation until they were swept away by the fire and flood which destroyed the guilty cause itself. What and how potent was the agency which this persistent injustice, these continued oppressions, exerted in bringing on that struggle, Omniscience

only knows. How important a factor it became in that combination of causes which hastened on the bloody struggle no human sagacity can divine. Nor can it be known how much the manly stand of Massachusetts, though then overborne, contributed to the building up of that power which, sixteen years later, grappled with slavery in arms and closed its career of crime.



## CHAPTER XLII.

### PLOT FOR THE ANNEXATION OF TEXAS.

Dominating Influences of the Slave Power. — Texas. — Immigration from the South. — Texas declared Independent. — Annexation to the United States proposed. — Rejected by Mr. Van Buren. — Election and Death of General Harrison. — Mr. Tyler. — Mr. Gilmer's Letter. — General Jackson's Letter. — Presidential Intrigue. — Address of Members of Congress against the Texas Scheme. — Duff Green's Letter. — Visit of Mr. Andrews and Mr. Tappan to England. — Motives for Annexation distinctly avowed. — Accusations against England. — Position of the British Government. — Texas or Disunion. — Conditions demanded by Texas. — Death of Mr. Upshur. — Mr. Calhoun made Secretary of State. — Treaty.

So marked had been the slaveholding policy of the United States, so distinct had been its avowals, that well-informed and thoughtful men in the Old World saw, and did not hesitate to characterize in fitting terms, the inconsistency of the great Republic. In the year 1845, Macaulay in the British parliament unquestionably gave expression to the well-considered sentiments of European opinion when he said : "That nation is the champion and upholder of slavery. They seek to extend slavery with more energy than was ever exerted by any other nation to diffuse civilization."

Of this policy and of those avowals no page of American history affords more striking examples than that which narrates the inception, progress, and consummation of the plot for the annexation of Texas. For, perhaps, at no point in that history was the ascendancy of the Slave Power more complete, nowhere along its gloomy pathway did the nation afford sadder examples of abject subserviency to its behests. For that power not only controlled the government and dictated its policy, but it made no concealment of its designs and purposes of control and dictation. It was openly and almost ostenta-

tiously proclaimed, not only that slavery should be protected against a threatened danger, but that it should be strengthened and its area extended. Its friends were not only busy, but they were open in their avowals of the object of their efforts.

When Louisiana was purchased of France, in 1803, by Mr. Jefferson, its western boundaries were undefined. Texas was claimed by both the United States and Spain, and there was danger of collision between the authorities of the two nations. Mr. Pinkney and Mr. Monroe were therefore directed by Mr. Jefferson, in 1805, to settle with Spain the question of boundary; and in 1816, Mr. Erving, minister to that government, was authorized to make a treaty fixing upon the Sabine River as the boundary between the two countries. Mr. Jefferson had virtually accepted such an arrangement in 1806 by assenting to an agreement between the American and Spanish commanders, on their respective frontiers, by which the troops of the United States were not to move beyond the Rio Hondo, and the troops of Spain were not to come east of the Sabine.

By the treaty of 1819 the claim of the United States to the undefined territory of Texas was ceded to Spain as a part of the consideration for the cession of Florida. This acquisition had been so earnestly urged by the slaveholders of Georgia and Alabama as a remedy or protection against the escape of slaves into that territory from those States, and so strong was the pressure upon the government, that Mr. Monroe, with the consent of all his Cabinet, agreed to this recession of Texas to Spain. It met with opposition, however, though unavailing, even from slaveholders themselves, a resolution being introduced into the House by Mr. Clay, dissenting from it. But the resolution was rejected, and the treaty received not only the sanction of the Senate, but also the approval of the country. Texas thus became an undisputed part of Mexico by the action of the United States; and when that country achieved her independence, this territory became an integral portion of that republic.

Efforts, however, were early made to recover it by treaty.

In 1827, Mr. Clay, then Secretary of State in the administration of Mr. Adams, authorized an offer of a million dollars to Mexico for the territory east of the Rio Grande. Under the administration of General Jackson, two years later, that offer was increased to four or five million dollars for Texas proper, which did not include either New Mexico or the valley of the Rio Grande. Other efforts were made by General Jackson, but Mexico persistently refused to treat for its cession on any terms. The avowed and probably the real reasons for those early efforts were to secure a better western boundary, to protect New Orleans, and to prevent the occupation of that territory by a foreign and hostile power. It was stated by Mr. Adams, in 1845, in the debate on the resolutions for the annexation of Texas, that it was a free country when he offered to purchase it, and that he had ever been willing to acquire it, as a free country, with the assent of Mexico.

By the decree of the President of Mexico, in 1829, slavery was abolished throughout the Mexican Republic. There being very few Mexican inhabitants in the territory known as Texas, the slave-masters looked with hungry eyes upon that region, whose climate, soil, and other natural resources, invited immigration. Adventurers, principally from the southwestern States, many of them broken in fortune and reckless and desperate in character, allured by unbounded prospects of wealth and power, flocked into the territory, and, with characteristic effrontery and lawlessness, took their slaves with them, though in plain defiance of Mexican law. With still greater audacity and criminality, secret agencies were formed for enlisting and arming men for the hardly concealed purpose of re-establishing slavery in territory which had been made free by Mexican statute, and even of wresting that territory from its allegiance to the Mexican government. Indeed, in 1832, Sam Houston, who had been a soldier under General Jackson, and who was subsequently a member of Congress and governor of Tennessee, went to Texas avowedly for the purpose of taking possession of the country, and of establishing there an independent government. In that work he received the support of large numbers of the Southern people, with the countenance, hardly dis-



guised, of the civil and military authorities of the United States.

On the 2d of March, 1836, the independence of Texas was proclaimed. A few weeks later the battle of San Jacinto was fought. Santa Anna, president of the Mexican Republic, having been taken prisoner, stipulated for the recognition of Texan independence, though Mexico would not sanction a treaty made by its president while thus held in duress.

Immediately after the battle of San Jacinto, Mr. Calhoun announced it to be the policy of the government to recognize at once the independence of Texas, and to annex it as soon as possible to the United States. In accordance with this boldly proclaimed object, its independence was recognized early in 1837, and its minister at Washington, General Hunt, proposed in August its annexation. The proposition was, however, rejected by Mr. Van Buren. Though generally subservient to the slaveholders' policy, he faltered here. This was a little too bold and unequivocal, and consequently Mr. Forsyth, his Secretary of State, in his reply to General Hunt, affirmed that the United States was bound to Mexico by a treaty of amity and commerce, which would be scrupulously observed; that so long as Texas should remain at war, while the United States was at peace with her adversary, the proposition "necessarily involved the question of war with that adversary." The Secretary further stated that the United States might justly be suspected of a disregard of the friendly purposes of the compact, if the overtures of General Hunt were to be reserved even for the purpose of future consideration, as this "would imply a disposition on our part to espouse the quarrel of Texas with Mexico."

This scheme having failed, no further overtures were made during Mr. Van Buren's administration. Those, however, who had disapproved of the policy of the cession of Texas to Spain in 1819, looked with favor on its recession if, as Mr. Benton expressed it, "its recovery" could be effected "without crime and infamy." But they generally relinquished the idea when they saw that it had now become a part of a scheme of sectional aggrandizement, another demand of the Slave Power,

another step in the march of slavery aggression and ascendancy. Mr. Adams had raised his warning voice against it; Mr. Webster, in his speech at Niblo's Garden, in March, 1837, nearly six months before the proposition had been made by the Texan authorities, declared that he saw "objections, insurmountable objections," to the annexation of Texas to the United States. He thought all the stipulations contained in the Constitution in favor of the slaveholding States which were already in the Union "ought to be fulfilled in the fullness of their spirit and to the exactness of their letter." "We all see," he said, "that by whomsoever possessed, Texas is likely to be a slaveholding country; and I frankly avow my unwillingness to do anything that shall extend the slavery of the African race on this continent, or add other slaveholding States to the Union." The legislatures of several States pronounced against annexation. The warning of Mr. Adams, the emphatic utterances of Mr. Webster, and the decisive refusal of Mr. Van Buren's administration, seemed to check, for a while, the effort, and to give its advocates the idea that a large work of preparation was essential to success.

But the advanced leaders, confident of ultimate triumph, determined to achieve it at no distant day; though, for prudential reasons, they did not make annexation an issue in the presidential contest of 1840. That election resulted in the defeat of the Democratic party. By the election of General Harrison the Whigs came into power. Though antislavery was not a plank in their platform, and the party had its Southern wing, it still embraced the few antislavery men in the country, and was generally regarded as more favorable to a humane and liberal policy than its antagonist. The President died, however, within one month, and John Tyler became his successor. Whatever of hope had been cherished by the friends of freedom was speedily dispelled by the accession of the Virginia slaveholder. The friends of the scheme saw that their hour and man had come. In Mr. Tyler they found one in hearty sympathy with their object, though his party affiliations linked him with the opponents of the measure. They therefore gathered around him, flattered his vanity,

excited his ambition, and separated him from the great body of the party which had elected him. But Mr. Webster, who had remained in Mr. Tyler's cabinet after his colleagues had retired, stood in the way, until the coldness, not to say rudeness, of some members of the administration, compelled him to resign. The State Department then passed into the hands of Mr. Legaré of South Carolina, then into those of Mr. Upshur of Virginia, and soon afterward into those of Mr. Calhoun, each of whom was an admitted propagandist, and ready to make any sacrifices in behalf of slavery and to execute any of the behests of the Slave Power.

Having colonized Texas in order that slavery might be extended, the slaveholders had wrested it from Mexico for the same purpose. They were now determined on its annexation; in the words of General Hamilton, to "give a Gibraltar to the South," and in those of Henry A. Wise, to give "more weight to her end of the lever." Southern legislatures declared that annexation would give an "equal poise of influence in the halls of Congress," and "a permanent guaranty of protection" to the slave system. The "Madisonian," President Tyler's organ, affirmed that annexation would have the most salutary influence upon slavery, and that "it must be done soon, or not at all." To "fire the Southern heart" and stimulate the administration, the leaders raised the war-cry of "Now, or never."

In the winter of 1843 it became apparent that a gigantic intrigue for annexation was in progress. Early in January a letter was published in a Baltimore paper, written by Thomas W. Gilmer, a member of the House from Virginia. He was a warm personal and political friend of Mr. Calhoun. Like many other young men of the South, trained in the Whig party, he had deserted it, and accepted the theories of the Calhoun school of Democracy. This letter was an adroit and skilful appeal in favor of immediate annexation, in order, as the writer said, to thwart the abolition designs of England. It was sent through Aaron Vail Brown, a member of the House from Tennessee, to General Jackson, with a view of drawing from him an answer in favor of seizing the golden opportunity



to secure the immediate admission of Texas, and to defeat the nomination of Mr. Van Buren for the presidency. Jackson, always in favor of the scheme, and ever devoted to the cause of slavery, replied, on the 13th of February, 1843, that the annexation of Texas had occupied much of his attention during his presidency ; that it had lost none of its importance ; and that, in all its aspects, it was essential to the United States. His letter was withheld from publication for more than a year, when it was brought out, with its date altered to 1844, for the purpose of aiding in carrying through the Senate the annexation treaty, and of affecting the action of the Democratic national convention, which was to meet in May at Baltimore. Mr. Benton, in his "Thirty Years' View," states that General Jackson's letter passed into the hands of Mr. Gilmer, that he showed it to a confidential friend, and said that "it was to be produced in the nominating convention, to overthrow Mr. Van Buren and give Mr. Calhoun the nomination, both of whom were to be interrogated beforehand, and as it was well known what the answers would be, — Calhoun for, and Van Buren against, immediate annexation, — and Jackson's answer coinciding with Calhoun's, would turn the scale in his favor, and 'blow Van Buren sky high.' "

The leaders in this annexation scheme were unquestionably ambitious, selfish, and unscrupulous intriguers, as charged by many of their political associates ; but their action was mainly inspired by slaveholding policy, so that this, like so many other of the great events of American history which have really tended to the aggrandizement and material advancement of the nation, was prompted and really accomplished for a no more worthy purpose than to strengthen and perpetuate the vile and inhuman system of chattel slavery.

At the close of the XXVIIIth Congress, twenty members of the House united in an address to the people of the free States, warning them against the scheme to bring a foreign slaveholding nation into the Union. This address was written, after consultation with Mr. Adams, Mr. Giddings, and Mr. Slade, by Seth M. Gates, a representative from New York. It set forth in direct, clear, and emphatic language the purpose

of the slaveholding power to secure, beyond all redemption, the perpetuation of slavery, and to maintain its continued ascendancy. It pronounced annexation to be a violation of our national compact, its objects, designs, and the great elementary principles which entered into its formation. It declared it to be "an attempt to eternize an institution and a power of a nature so unjust in themselves, so injurious to the interests and abhorrent to the feelings of the people of the free States, as in our opinion not only inevitably to result in a dissolution of the Union, but fully to justify it; and we not only assert that the people of the free States ought not to submit to it, but we say with confidence that they will not submit to it." It was published generally in the Whig papers of the free States, and contributed largely to awaken the people to the meditated action of the leaders of annexation.

These motives for annexation, it is to be observed, were distinctly avowed by its advocates. Nor did they hesitate to proclaim, almost defiantly, that all risks to be run and all sacrifices to be made were for slavery. Mr. Upshur, Secretary of State, in his letter of the 8th of August, 1843, to Mr. Murphy, the *Chargé d'Affaires* in Texas, expressly declared that "few calamities could befall this country, more to be deplored than the abolition of slavery in Texas." In a despatch of the 22d of September, he assured Mr. Murphy that there was no reason to fear that there would be any difference of opinion among the slaveholding States touching the policy of annexation, which he pronounced "absolutely necessary to the salvation of the South." In his despatch of the 21st of November of that year, he distinctly announced that "we regard annexation as involving the security of the South," and in that of the 16th of January, 1844, he asserted that "if Texas should not be attached to the United States she cannot maintain that institution ten years, and probably not half that time."

These frank and unhesitating avowals on the part of Mr. Upshur, seemed to alarm Mr. Murphy, who, intent upon securing the prize, deprecated anything that looked like a needless obstacle thrown in its way, and he cautioned the too outspoken secretary against offending "our fanatical brethren at the

North," suggesting, at the same time, that the idea that annexation was undertaken for "the cause of civil and religious liberty" was the safest issue to present to the nation at large. "The Constitution of Texas," said Mr. Murphy in a despatch to Mr. Upshur, "secures to the master the perpetual right to his slave, and prohibits the introduction of slavery into Texas from any other quarter than from the United States. If the United States preserves and secures to Texas the possession of her Constitution, then we have gained all we can desire, and all that Texas asks or wishes."

Nor was Mr. Calhoun any less explicit. Having, on the death of Mr. Upshur, succeeded to the State Department, he wrote to Mr. Green, the representative of the government in Mexico, that "it was impossible for the United States to witness with indifference the efforts of Great Britain to abolish slavery in Texas." To the British minister he wrote on the 27th of April, while the treaty was pending in the Senate, that annexation "was made necessary in order to preserve domestic institutions, placed under the guaranty of the Constitutions of the United States and Texas." He also gravely asserted that what is called slavery is in reality a political institution, "essential to the peace, safety, and prosperity of those States of the Union in which it exists," and he avowed that Texas was to be annexed to guard against the danger of the abolition of slavery in the Southern States. Mr. Green was instructed to say to Mexico, that the treaty of annexation was forced upon the government in self-defence, in consequence of the policy adopted by Great Britain in reference to the abolition of slavery in Texas.

Nor were these statements misapprehended, or the position of the government misunderstood. For the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations sharply and with dignity replied: "When, in order to sustain slavery and avoid its disappearance from Texas and from other points, recourse is had to the arbitrary act of depriving Mexico of an integral part of her possessions as the only certain and efficacious remedy to prevent what Mr. Green calls 'a dangerous event,' if Mexico should be silent and lend her deference to the present policy of the Executive



of the United States, the reproach and censure of nations ought to be her reward."

Even the more thoughtful and scrupulous of the Democratic party itself saw and felt the degradation of such utterances from men high in station. Thus the New York "Evening Post," then a leading organ of the Democratic party, conducted by William C. Bryant, well described the unnatural and humiliating position of the government and the vital issue then pending: "It is evident that this presents to the people a question entirely new, and which they cannot avoid. This issue is not as to the abolition of slavery in the Southern States, the District, nor the Territories of the Union, but whether this government shall devote its whole energies to the perpetuation of slavery; whether all the sister republics on this continent, which desire to abolish slavery, are to be dragooned by us into the support of this institution."

Unscrupulous as were the annexation managers, and little as they hesitated at any means for the accomplishment of the end in view, nowhere did they seem more reckless of assertion than in their attempt to fix upon England what they represented the crime of promoting the abolition of slavery in Texas. Duff Green, a friend of Mr. Calhoun, "an intermeddler in other men's matters," and fond of intrigue, then in England, reported that there was then in the process of incubation a plot for the abolition of slavery in Texas. It was charged by this serviceable instrument that Stephen Pearl Andrews, then in London, was negotiating with the British Cabinet, to secure the abolition of slavery in Texas, by the guaranty by England of ten million dollars in Texan bonds.

There was a modicum of truth in the charge, if it be not an abuse of language to apply that term to any legitimate attempt to rescue such an embryo State from the curse of slavery. Mr. Andrews, who then resided in Texas, had endeavored to form an emancipation party in its two leading cities, Houston and Galveston. Though at first successful in gaining adherents to his plan, it failed because of the general unwillingness to submit to the pecuniary sacrifices involved. The depressed state of the market for slave products and for slaves

themselves suggested and encouraged the project of seeking emancipation through compensation, many who had opposed the former plan accepting the latter. Believing that the British Abolitionists would gladly aid in such a scheme, Mr. Andrews visited New York for the purpose of finding those who would be willing to join in the effort. Stating the facts that there were but some twenty-five thousand slaves in Texas, and that the contribution of four or five million dollars would make Texas a free State, he found that the antislavery men of that city and its vicinity were ready to listen to his suggestions, and to co-operate in the proposed endeavor.

Lewis Tappan, with his prompt and large-hearted philanthropy, entered earnestly into the attempt, and accompanied Mr. Andrews to England for the purpose of making, if possible, such arrangements with the English government. Members of the Cabinet were consulted. They expressed their sympathy with the object aimed at, but asserted that the government as such could not enter into any such arrangement without involving England in a war with the United States. Lord Palmerston, though in the opposition, concurred in the views expressed by Lord Aberdeen. Lord Brougham conceded, though reluctantly, that the government could not render such aid and still preserve friendly relations with this country. No objections, however, were urged against such private contributions as individuals might see fit to make. No money, however, was raised. The Secretary of State, seeming to assume that it was the duty of the national government to support slavery in a foreign nation as well as in his own, communicated these incidents of "an alarming character" to Mr. Murphy, and directed him to consult the Texan authorities in regard to annexation.

The charges of Duff Green against the British cabinet were promptly denied by Lord Aberdeen, in a communication to the American minister, Mr. Everett, and transmitted by him to the State Department in November of that year. Lord Aberdeen also sent to the British minister a peremptory denial in a despatch, dated the 26th of December, which was communicated to Mr. Upshur on the 26th of February, two days before his

death, which was caused by the bursting of a gun on board the war steamer "Princeton." In this despatch the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs made this declaration, so honorable to the British government: "The governments of the slaveholding States may be assured that although we shall not desist from those open and honest efforts which we have constantly made for procuring the abolition of slavery throughout the world, we shall neither openly nor secretly resort to any measures which shall tend to disturb their domestic tranquillity." Mr. Packingham, too, the British minister, replied to the accusations of the Secretary of State against England, disavowing in the clearest and strongest language the designs imputed to his government.

When Congress assembled in December, 1843, it was seen that the plot had made great progress, and the probabilities of success seemed to many great. In addition to these utterances of her public men, there were corresponding efforts throughout the South. State legislatures, public meetings, and the press, entered vigorously upon the work of preparing the public mind of the country for the consummation of a purpose its leaders had so much at heart. The legislature of Mississippi perhaps gave expression to the more advanced and intense views and feelings of the propagandists, when it declared slavery to be "the very palladium of their prosperity and happiness"; that the South does not possess within its limits "a blessing with which the affections of her people are so closely intertwined and so completely enfibred"; and that "the protection of her best interests will be afforded by the annexation of Texas." Governor Gilmer, in the letter already referred to, had expressed the opinion that the institutions of Texas would incline her people "to unite her destiny with ours," and that annexation would have a most salutary influence on slavery itself. But, he added, she must be annexed "soon, or not at all."

Nor was the menace of dissolution wanting. "Texas or disunion" became a watchword and a rallying cry. A convention of the slaveholding States was demanded "to take into consideration," in the words of a meeting in the Barn-



well District, South Carolina, "the question of annexing Texas to the Union, if the Union will accept it; or, if the Union will not accept it, then of annexing Texas to the Southern States"; and to have "the alternative distinctly presented to the free States, either to admit Texas into the Union or to proceed peaceably and calmly to arrange the terms of a dissolution of the Union." Another meeting in the Williamsburgh District of the same State declared that "it was better to be out of the Union with Texas than in it without her." At Beaufort, another of these assemblages announced that they would dissolve the Union "sooner than abandon Texas."

But the scheme was beset with difficulties that would have discouraged any but the desperate men engaged in this work. Indeed, it is difficult to sound the depths of mendacity or to scale the heights of audacity reached. Texas was at war with Mexico, a friendly power, and there was an armistice, with a fair prospect of a favorable result of the negotiations then in progress. The Texan President, therefore, seeing his advantage, or his danger, or both, made it a condition precedent of all negotiations that the United States should assume the Mexican war, and that it should place at his disposal, "subject to his orders," sufficient naval and military forces for the protection of the belligerent State. This audacious and unconstitutional demand was too much even for Mr. Upshur, who retained it unanswered for a month, when his death occurred. Mr. Nelson, the Attorney-General, for a few days acting Secretary of State, gave an adverse decision, affirming that the government had no constitutional power thus to use the military forces of the nation.

Mr. Calhoun, however, on his accession as Secretary, saw no insuperable objections. He therefore renewed the negotiation, and on the day before the treaty of annexation was signed, he gave to Texas, in the words of Mr. Benton, "the fatal pledge which his predecessors had refused, and followed it up by sending our ships and troops to fight a people with whom we were at peace; the whole veiled with the mantle of secrecy." This was the testimony of a slaveholder, of one, too, who subsequently supported the scheme,—that it was a

palpable violation of the Constitution and of the laws of nations, and an unpardonable outrage upon the rights of a friendly people. Nor did Mr. Benton seem to have much confidence in the leaders of this crusade in the matter of slavery itself. He expressed the belief that, at the bottom and under the pretext of getting Texas into the Union, the scheme was to get the South out of it. The whole scheme he characterized "as an intriguing negotiation, concealed from Congress and the people; an abolition quarrel picked with Great Britain to father an abolition quarrel at home, a slavery correspondence to outrage the North, war with Mexico, the clandestine concentration of troops and ships at the Southwest, the secret compact with the President of Texas and the subjection of American forces to his command, and the flagrant seizure of the purse and the sword."

Mr. Calhoun, the corypheus of the annexation scheme, entered the State Department early in March. Proceeding at once with the negotiations begun by Mr. Upshur, he concluded on the 12th of April a treaty of annexation. That concluded, he took up the despatch of Lord Aberdeen, which had remained unanswered, and, seizing upon the declaration that England desired the abolition of slavery throughout the world, made an elaborate argument in favor of slavery and against the policy of England, which he assumed to be hostile to the slaveholding policy of the country. This despatch, written on the 18th, was sent with the treaty to the Senate. But before it left the country it was promulgated here to promote the cause of immediate annexation, assumed to be necessary because of the abolition machinations of Great Britain. Ten days thereafter it was sent to the Senate by the President with a message. In it he assured the Senate that the Southern and Southwestern States would find in annexation "protection and security, peace and tranquillity, as well against all domestic as foreign efforts to disturb them."

Of course a treaty involving such momentous issues and consequences so important to the nation became the occasion of a long and heated debate. During these debates the lobbies of the capitol were crowded by land-jobbers and flesh-

jobbers; Texas scrip-holders and the owners and agents of Mexican claims were drawn thither as if by a common instinct. Like beasts and birds of prey they seemed to scent the spoils they hoped to win, and they infested by their noisome presence every department of the government. They were clamorous for the treaty, and by their paid agents and advocates slandered and misrepresented the motives and actions of those who stood between them and the objects of their greedy desire. Never before had Congress been subjected to a pressure so severe and to influences so corrupt. The administration, too, brought to the support of the treaty all its powers and all its seductive influences. But all these efforts were unavailing. Instead of receiving the needed "two-thirds" vote, less than one third of the Senate were found willing to record their names in its favor; and on the 10th of June it was defeated by a vote of sixteen to thirty-five. Of the sixteen who voted for the treaty, five were from the North. Of that number were James Buchanan and Levi Woodbury. Their ready obedience to the behests of slavery was not forgotten. The one was soon made Secretary of State, and the other was elevated to the bench of the Supreme Court.

After the treaty was communicated to the Senate, and before its action, there were public meetings, many without distinction of party, in different parts of the country. Among them was one in the city of New York, on the 24th of April. There were present many of the most distinguished men of the city. The aged and illustrious Albert Gallatin presided, and the officers of the meeting were equally divided between the two parties. The venerable Chancellor Kent sent a letter in which he expressed the conviction that the annexation of Texas without the consent of Mexico would be "a breach of faith and honor which should be universally condemned." On taking the chair, Mr. Gallatin declared that to annex Texas under the present condition of affairs was to make the United States a party to the war with Mexico, and that, "according to the universally acknowledged laws of nations and universal usage of all Christian nations, to annex Texas is war."



And he further stated that in making that declaration he would be "sustained by any publicist in the Christian world." He said that this would be a war of conquest founded in injustice,—a disgrace to the national character. "This measure," he said, "will bring indelible disgrace upon democratic institutions; it will excite the hopes of their enemies; it will check the hopes of the friends of mankind." "I am highly gratified," he said in closing, "that the last public act of a long life, the last accents of an almost extinguished voice, should be employed in bearing testimony against this outrageous attempt" upon the peace, safety, and honor of our beloved land.

The causes of this defeat were various. But the main reason, doubtless, lay in the fact that the work of preparation had not been fully accomplished, the dragooning process had not been completed. The fires had indeed raged furiously, but they had not burned long enough to fuse the conflicting views, purposes, and individualities of those who were, nevertheless, in a position and in a state of mind to be converted to any policy slavery might dictate or its wants render necessary. But up to that hour this work remained incomplete, and thus not only did the Senate reject the treaty by this decisive vote, but the House of Representatives refused a favorable reception to a message from the President still invoking immediate action, while the measure proposed in the Senate by Mr. Benton himself, to open negotiations with Mexico and Texas for the adjustment of boundaries and the annexation of the latter to the American Union, failed. The question had become so complicated with other issues, there were so many points involved on which members had so fully committed themselves, the movement had become so confessedly a simple purpose and project in the support of slavery, that a majority in neither House could then be controlled or brought to take the position involved in the treaty.

But the men who were engineering this project were in earnest, not to be deterred by obstacles, and not ignorant of the advantage these two facts gave them, that there were the two national parties, each dependent on its "Southern wing,"

and that with the growing idea in the Southern mind, that, on all questions where there was a conflict between the claims of slavery and of party, the claims of slavery must be paramount. It was also becoming more and more apparent that this was a case in which the vital interests of "the peculiar institution" were involved and must be regarded.

In this state of affairs the friends of annexation were not only prepared, but determined, to carry the question into the presidential election of 1844. The indications in the winter of that year were that Mr. Van Buren was the choice of the Democratic party, though he had not the confidence, nor was he the choice, of the plotters of annexation, either South or North. To compel him to define his position, Mr. Hammet of Mississippi addressed him a letter in the month of March, while negotiations were pending, requesting him to make a statement of his opinions upon the question. Having been appointed a delegate to the approaching nominating convention, he intimated that Mr. Van Buren's views would probably influence the results of that convention. Mr. Van Buren's reply, dated on the 20th of April, only two days before the treaty was transmitted to the Senate, while avoiding any reference to slavery, admitted that annexation in itself considered was desirable. He, however, deprecated its immediate consummation because, he said, it would, "in all human probability, draw after it a war with Mexico." He also insisted upon the importance and necessity of maintaining the sacred obligations of treaty stipulations, the duty of preserving peaceful relations with friendly powers, and of keeping unsullied our own national honor. This dignified and patriotic letter, however, sealed his fate. Though he was the unquestioned choice of a decided majority of his party as its candidate for the presidency, he could not be trusted by those who were resolved to have Texas at any price. With them patriotism and a nice sense of national honor were at a discount, and some more pliant tool must be found.

In the Democratic convention, which assembled at Baltimore on the 27th of May, Mr. Van Buren received on the first ballot a majority of thirty. His enemies and treacherous

friends had, however, adopted what was called the "two-thirds rule," and that rendered his nomination impossible. On the eighth ballot his name was withdrawn, and James K. Polk received the nomination. Mr. Polk was a slaveholder, an uncompromising and fanatical advocate of the system, an unscrupulous partisan, and fully committed to the policy of annexation. The nomination for the vice-presidency was offered to Silas Wright of New York, but promptly declined. George M. Dallas of Pennsylvania, ever obsequious to the behests of the Slave Power, was then selected as candidate for that office.

The convention then resolved that "the reoccupation of Oregon and the reannexation of Texas at the earliest practicable period are great American questions which the convention recommends to the cordial support of the Democracy of the Union." By adopting this platform, by overslaughing Mr. Van Buren, who only objected to annexation in the interests of peace and national honor, and by taking a candidate whose chief recommendation was his loudly proclaimed adhesion to the scheme, the Slave Power gained a decisive victory, and fully committed the Democratic party to that policy of slavery propagandism which the Southern leaders were so fiercely pursuing.

Mr. Clay was unquestionably the choice of the masses of the Whig party, though many in its ranks would have preferred a candidate whose position and past avowals had not so fully identified him with slavery. His friends, however, were zealous and enthusiastic in his support, and they believed that the time had come to place him in the executive chair. Of course his views on the subject of annexation became matters of public solicitude and inquiry, and he was compelled to define his position on the troublesome question. In a letter, dated at Raleigh, April 17, he set forth his opinions with clearness and precision. He referred to and deprecated the fact that annexation was both espoused and opposed on sectional grounds. He said that the acquisition of territory for the purpose of strengthening one portion of the country against the other would be pregnant with fatal consequences.



He declared that "annexation and war with Mexico are identical"; and that such a measure at that time would compromise the national character, be dangerous to the integrity of the Union, and be inexpedient in the then financial condition of affairs, and that it was not called for by any general expression of public opinion.

Two weeks after the publication of this letter, Mr. Clay was nominated by acclamation for the presidency at the Whig convention at Baltimore. With him was associated Theodore Frelinghuysen, a gentleman of high personal worth and position, but of conservative views and tendencies.

The Liberty party, too, had entered the contest with the name of James G. Birney as its candidate for the presidency, and that of Thomas Morris of Ohio for the vice-presidency. On all the issues growing out of the existence of slavery its principles were clearly defined, and its policy distinctly proclaimed, "the absolute and unqualified divorce of the general government from slavery."

Of course the Abolitionists who adhered to the American Antislavery Society and its auxiliaries took no part in the election except to criticise each of the parties, its policy, and its candidates. They announced as their watchword "the dissolution of all union between liberty and slavery." They proclaimed their resolute and invincible determination to arouse the country to a sense of its danger, and the necessity of resolute action.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### TEXAS PLOT CONSUMMATED.

Presidential Election. — The Issue distinctly presented. — Position of the Whig and Democratic Parties. — Embarrassing Position of Antislavery Men. — The Alabama Letter. — Secret Circular. — Mr. Walker's Letter. — Election of Mr. Polk. — Meeting of Congress. — Mr. Benton's Bill. — Mr. Hale's Proposition. — Mr. Ingersoll's Resolution. — Mr. Hamlin's Motion. — The Debates. — Adoption of Mr. Brown's Amendment. — Passage of the Resolutions. — Reported against by the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs. — Debates in the Senate. — Mr. Walker's Amendment. — Mr. Miller's Amendment. — Passage of Joint Resolutions. — Position of Southern Whigs. — Weakness or Treachery of Northern Democrats. — Action of Mr. Tyler. — Rejoicing of the Friends of Annexation.

THE adroit leaders of the Slave Power had succeeded in forcing upon the country the direct issue of immediate annexation. Never had the nation been brought to confront an issue so palpably and flagrantly wrong, and never had it presented a more sad and humiliating spectacle. Mankind could not fail to comprehend that it involved aggression, conquest, the establishment of slavery where it had been prohibited by Mexico, the strengthening of the slave system at home, and the continued ascendancy of the slave-masters in the United States. Nor could the civilized world fail to see that if annexation and war were identical, the banners of Mexico, not the banners of Christian and republican America, would be the banners of liberty and civilization.

Though painfully awake to this wickedness and ignominy, the antislavery opponents of annexation were so few in numbers, really possessing small political influence, and that diminished by other complications, that they felt greatly perplexed and had grave doubts about the best use of the little political power they did possess. A vote for Mr. Birney was indeed an individual commitment, yet hardly more, as it could

contribute little or nothing to prevent the impending catastrophe of annexation. A vote for Mr. Clay, with his commitments and the commitments of his party North and South, was clearly a vote against immediate annexation. But such were the conditions of his opposition and that of his Southern supporters, that it was seen that they could be, and probably would be, removed at no distant day. Mr. Clay's personal position, too, was far from satisfactory. His life, acts, and opinions had given no assurance that he opposed annexation on the ground that it would strengthen slavery. On the contrary, he was known to entertain and to have expressed the opinion that "slavery ought not to affect the question one way or the other." This embarrassment was increased by his Alabama letter of the 16th of August, which had been wrung from him by the importunity of Southern Whigs, who seriously felt the sectional pressure of the advocates of annexation.

In this unfortunate letter, believed to have been the fatal obstacle to his success, he expressed the opinion that annexation would not prolong or shorten the duration of slavery, which was destined to become extinct, as he believed, at some distant day, by the inevitable laws of population; besides, he said, "far from having any personal objection to the annexation of Texas, I should be glad to see it, without dishonor, without war, with the common consent of the Union, and upon just and fair terms." Mr. Clay's Southern supporters had been put on the defensive, while those in the North had been aggressive, hopeful, and confident of victory. This letter reversed their positions. "It placed," says Mr. Greeley, ever Mr. Clay's admirer and devoted friend, "the Northern advocates of his election on the defensive during the remainder of the canvass, and weakened their previous hold on the moral convictions of the more considerate and conscientious voters of the free States."

In a subsequent letter Mr. Clay distinctly avowed that there was not a feeling, a sentiment, or an opinion expressed in his Raleigh letter, to which he did not adhere; that he was decidedly opposed to immediate annexation, because it would be dishonorable, involve the nation in war, be dangerous to the



integrity and harmony of the Union, and could not be effected upon just and admissible conditions. But these apparently conflicting declarations served only to confuse the public mind, render more difficult the task of decision, and make still more obscure the path of duty. Yet, under circumstances so well calculated to dishearten, distract, and divide the opponents of annexation, more than sixty thousand men, who really held the result in their own hands, voted for Mr. Birney, although they were morally certain he could not receive a single electoral vote.

Few were so blind as not to see that a vote for Mr. Polk was a vote for immediate annexation. When his nomination was announced, Northern Democrats were greatly incensed at the treatment Mr. Van Buren had received. Many of them had warmly approved the sentiments of his letter against immediate annexation, and had, in many ways, pronounced against a policy which, they could not fail to see, endangered the peace of the country, besides unreservedly committing the nation to the extension of slavery. Silas Wright had voted against the treaty of annexation, and as the Democratic candidate for governor of New York he had proclaimed in the canvass his continued hostility to that measure. Several eminent friends of Mr. Van Buren in that State united in issuing a circular urging Democrats, while supporting Mr. Polk, to repudiate the Texan scheme. The high character of the men who signed that circular, so sharply criticised and denounced by their associates, is an assurance of the purity of their motives, though a more fatuous course could not have been devised. That circular and the declarations of Mr. Wright unquestionably gave the controlling vote of the great State of New York to Mr. Polk, made the immediate annexation of Texas inevitable, and crowned the continued intrigues and plottings of the Slave Power with signal triumph.

During that evenly balanced and hotly contested canvass seductive appeals were made to the selfishness of the North. Robert J. Walker, perhaps more than any other man the organizing and effective agent of that slavery-extending plot, issued a long and elaborate letter, written with the power and

tact of which he was an acknowledged master, appealing to the cupidity of the commercial, manufacturing, and moneyed interests of the land. The acquisition of Texas, he claimed, would largely increase Southern production, and thus promote the shipping, mercantile, and mechanical interests of the non-slaveholding States. Nor did he miscalculate. The lust of dominion, the greed of gain, and the love of office, silencing the voice of patriotism, honor, and conscience, gave a transcendent victory to the Slave Power.

He used, too, the language of warning. "Let it be known," he said, "and proclaimed as a certain truth, and as a result which can never hereafter be challenged or recalled, that upon the refusal of annexation, now and in all time to come, the tariff as a practical measure fails wholly and forever, and we shall hereafter be compelled to resort to direct taxes to support the government." This menace, aimed at the friends of domestic industry, was not wholly without effect. But those who were in any degree influenced by it lived to see the protective policy, under the lead of Mr. Walker himself, overthrown, and the free-trade tariff of 1846 carried by the votes of Texan senators.

On the first Monday of December, 1844, the XXVIIIth Congress commenced its closing session. Emboldened by the manifest significance of the election, the advocates of annexation entered at once on the work of its consummation. President Tyler in his message called for immediate action. He claimed that the verdict of the people had been decisively expressed upon the issue of annexation, which had been nakedly presented to their consideration. He expressed the hope that Congress, in carrying into execution the public will, clearly proclaimed by a controlling majority of the people and by a large majority of the States, would avoid all collateral issues and press at once towards the consummation he had so much at heart. For Mr. Tyler was not only influenced by the ordinary motives which impelled the South to seek for annexation, but he desired, if possible, to signalize his administration by an event of so much importance to slavery and to slaveholders.

Resolutions of admission were introduced into the Senate on the 10th, by Mr. McDuffie of South Carolina. On the 11th, Mr. Benton introduced a bill, providing that a State, to be called "the State of Texas, with boundaries fixed by herself," not exceeding in size the largest State, be admitted into the Union, the remainder of the annexed territory to be held by the United States and to be called the "Southwest Territory." This bill further provided that the existence of slavery should be forever prohibited in that part of the Territory west of the 100° of longitude, so as to divide equally the whole annexed territory between the slaveholding and non-slaveholding States.

In the House, on the 10th of January, John P. Hale, then a Democratic representative from New Hampshire, moved the suspension of the rules to allow him to introduce a proposition to divide Texas into two parts, by a line beginning at a point on the Gulf of Mexico midway between the northern and southern boundaries, and running in a northwesterly direction. In the territory south and west of that line it was provided there should be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, and that provision was forever to remain an unalterable compact. The motion received eleven majority, but, requiring a two-thirds vote, it failed.

On the 12th, Charles J. Ingersoll, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations in the House, introduced resolutions of annexation. Resolutions were also introduced by John B. Weller of Ohio, Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, and several other Democratic members. Mr. Hamlin of Maine, then a Democratic member, moved to refer these resolutions to a select committee of one from each State, with instructions to report whether Congress had power to annex a foreign, independent nation; whether annexation would not extend slavery; whether by the acknowledgment of Texan independence Mexico was deprived of her right to reconquer that province; whether Texas owed any debts, and what treaties she had with other powers. But his motion was rejected. The several propositions were referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.



On the 3d of January the House, on motion of Mr. Ingersoll, proceeded to the consideration of the joint resolutions he had reported. Mr. Weller moved to amend by striking out all after the enacting clause and substituting the resolutions he had introduced, and Mr. Douglas moved to amend Mr. Weller's amendment by substituting for it the resolutions he had introduced.

In the debate which was then opened were exhibited the different views and shades of opinion evoked by this rash and radical measure thus precipitated on the nation by the Slave Power. As it was a question of power, rather than of reason, of might more than of right, the advocates of the measure prudently abstained from any great show of argument. As none but the most violent and outspoken would avow the real reason, eulogies on the compromises of the Constitution, clamors for peace and concession, and diatribes against the aggressions of the Abolitionists, constituted the staple of the speeches in its defence. Against the measure there was greater variety, embracing the language of those who opposed it on the high ground of principle; Northern Democrats who deprecated its influence on their party strength; and the Southern Whigs, who feared its effects on the country and even on slavery itself. Opening the debate, Mr. Ingersoll referred to the many plans that had been introduced into the House, proving, he said, that many coveted the honor of being the advocates of the admission of Texas. But for slavery the American people were united for the measure. He avowed that "it is undeniable that Southern interests, Southern frontiers and Southern institutions — I mean slavery and all — are to be primarily regarded in settling the restoration of Texas."

One of the earliest and ablest to participate in the debate was William L. Yancey of Alabama. A disciple of Calhoun and an eloquent defender of his principles, he clearly comprehended and frankly admitted the necessities of slavery in its competition with freedom. Referring to statistics which showed that the slaveholding States were losing "relative strength in the representative branch of the government,"

he declared that they had compromised away all possibility of retaining an equality in the Senate by the fatal Missouri Compromise, and that a fearful prospective inequality stared them in the face. Complaining that the world was arrayed against them, that their "favorite institution" was attacked day after day, month after month, and year after year, he avowed that "the highest consideration of individual, sectional, and national interests urge us on to annexation."

Mr. Holmes of South Carolina pronounced that Southern man a fool or a knave who would divide Texas between freedom and slavery; and Mr. Rhett of the same State said, "The South has been wantonly wronged, insulted, and betrayed." He charged the people of the North with the offence of laboring "to instigate hatred, insurrection, and violence," which rendered Texas, in the Southern mind, necessary to insure the domestic tranquillity they had disturbed.

Moses Norris, a Democratic member from New Hampshire, bitterly assailed the Abolitionists. He charged that while they had "liberty and philanthropy on the folds of their flag, they were arming themselves to overthrow the Constitution and break up the Confederacy."

Andrew Johnson of Tennessee, afterward President of the United States, said that annexation would give the government the command of the Gulf, that streams of wealth would flow from her mines and fertile fields, and that the profitable employment of slave labor there would enable the master to soften the condition of the bondmen; and, singularly enough, he contended that annexation would "prove to be the gateway out of which the sable sons of Africa are to pass from bondage to freedom where they can become merged in a population congenial with themselves, who know and feel no distinction in consequence of the various hues of skin or crosses of blood."

In a very different strain spoke Mr. Rathbun, a member of the same party from New York. He characterized with stern severity the resolution, and denounced the Northern member who should vote for it. "He braves," he said, "the public opinion of the North; he scorns the interests of the North;

he arouses the indignation of the North ; he fixes upon himself a mark which time cannot efface."

Among the Northern Whigs a similar variety appears. Mr. Winthrop of Massachusetts opposed the project because, he argued, it was unconstitutional in substance, would violate the compromises of the Constitution, would endanger the permanence of the Union ; and because he was "uncompromisingly opposed to slavery, or the addition of another inch of slaveholding territory to the nation."

Colonel John J. Harding of Illinois, who afterward fell at the head of his regiment at the battle of Buena Vista, characterized annexation "as an unwise, reckless, selfish, sectional, and slavery-extending policy." He reminded Southern gentlemen who had pictured in their imagination a Southern confederacy, that the free States on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers would hold the latter to its mouth against the united chivalry of the South, and that if dissolution took place, either in consequence of the Texas scheme, or from any other cause, their confederacy must be wholly east of the Mississippi.

Daniel D. Barnard of New York made a learned and able constitutional argument against the Joint Resolution, denouncing it as being framed "in contempt of the Constitution." "The measure of annexation is," he said, "wild, bold, and extravagant enough in itself, considered in the light of the Constitution, but it is a thousand times more wild, bold, and extravagant when taken in connection with slavery."

Mr. Hamlin of Ohio spoke earnestly in deprecation of the measure, and drew gloomy presages of its effect upon the reputation and subsequent political history of the nation. It will present the humiliating spectacle, he said, of the republic standing forth unblushingly before the world as the defender of slavery. No stranger could read the correspondence of the Secretary of State without feeling that "we have no other god but the god of slavery." "The people of the North," he said, "have reaped the bitter fruits of the Missouri Compromise, and have seen and felt the iron rule of slavery." He predicted that if slavery should then triumph, the line dividing parties would henceforth be between freedom and slavery, and "the



South will then find not only that the sceptre has departed from Judah and a lawgiver from between his feet, but that the Shiloh of the slave has come."

It remained for Mr. Giddings to place his opposition and that of those he represented on the high plane of moral rectitude, and to draw his arguments, motives, and appeals from the precepts of Christianity as well as from the workings of nature. "Do we believe," he inquired, "that there is a power above us that will visit national sins with national judgments? I am one who solemnly believes that transgressions and punishments are inseparably connected with the inscrutable wisdom of God's providence. With this impression I feel as confident that chastisement and tribulation for the offences we have committed against the down-trodden sons of Africa await this people as I do that justice controls the destinies of nations and guides the power of Omnipotence."

On the 13th of January, Milton Brown, a Tennessee Whig, introduced into the House a joint resolution declaring the terms on which Congress will admit Texas into the Union as a State; and on the same day, Mr. Foster, another Tennessee Whig, introduced the same resolution into the Senate. The opponents of annexation had relied upon a majority in the House against that measure. Several Democratic members, who had been confidently relied upon to oppose it, under the influence of an incoming administration pledged to the measure, were evidently hesitating and faltering. It had not been anticipated, however, that any Whig member would vote for it. But the action of Mr. Brown created no little anxiety and alarm.

After this earnest and excited debate, which continued until the 25th of January, the voting was commenced. Mr. Douglas's amendments, as well as several others, offered to Mr. Weller's amendment to the resolution reported by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, having been rejected, Mr. Brown moved to strike out Mr. Weller's amendment and insert the resolutions he had introduced. At the suggestion of Mr. Douglas, he so modified it as to provide that slavery should be prohibited in so much of Texas as lay north of the Missouri Compromise

line. His amendment was then agreed to by ten majority, then substituted for the original resolutions of the Committee on Foreign Affairs by a majority of seventeen, and then passed by a majority of twenty-two.

Instead of a majority of thirty against it, which had been anticipated, upon estimates based upon former votes and avowals, and upon pledges which had been made to a committee appointed by a Whig caucus to canvass the House, there was a majority of more than twenty for it. Whence that change? Many of the agencies which wrought it were patent to the country. The results of the presidential election, the known opinions and purposes of the President elect, the patronage of the incoming administration, the intense activity and growing power of the slaveholding interest, were potent influences, and contributed mainly to this result. But there were many who, watching that struggle, believed that Texas scrip had much to do in that work of demoralization.

The Joint Resolution was introduced in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, of which Mr. Archer of Virginia was chairman. Although from a slaveholding State, he promptly recommended its indefinite postponement. But Mr. Buchanan, a member of the committee, then as ever afterward, even to the close of his feeble and disastrous administration, derelict to his section, a serviceable instrument of the Slave Power, more truly deserving than he to whom it was originally applied the appellation of a "Northern man with Southern principles," opposed the action of the committee, and made an elaborate argument in favor of the constitutionality of admitting Texas by Joint Resolution.

Rufus Choate of Massachusetts made a brilliant and eloquent speech in opposition, both on the ground of power and expediency. We could not, he contended, admit Texas by the joint resolution of the House, "if it would insure a thousand years of liberty to the Union, if, like the fabled garden of old, its rivers should run pearls and its trees bear imperial fruit of gold,—yet even then we could not admit her, because it would sin against the Constitution."

William L. Dayton of New Jersey, then a Whig, afterward

the first candidate for the Vice-Presidency of the Republican party, and subsequently minister to France during the Rebellion, made an able argument against the passage of the Joint Resolution. Mr. Archer declared that "a blow parricidal is now aimed against the Constitution of the United States." Mr. Buchanan, who was to be Secretary of State of the incoming administration, on the other hand, protested that in voting for the resolution he was performing the greatest public act of his life. "I shall," he said, "do it cheerfully, gladly, gloriously, because I believe my vote will confer blessings innumerable on my fellow-men, now, henceforward, and forever."

Several senators participated in the debate, which continued to the 27th of February. It was moved by Mr. Foster of Tennessee that the Joint Resolution be amended so as to provide that so much of the territory as lay south of the Missouri Compromise line should be admitted with or without slavery, as each State should determine, but the motion was rejected. An amendment was then moved by Mr. Walker of Mississippi, proposing further negotiations if deemed advisable by the Executive. This adroit move was intended to smooth the way by which Benton, Dix, Niles, and other Democratic senators, who had opposed the treaty, might vote for the measure.

Mr. Foster declared he would vote for the House resolution without, but not with, the amendment, as it was intended to "qualify a great act." He proceeded to express his want of confidence in the North, and wished those who were making outcries against slavery would go to the South and "see how happy is the black man, and compare him with the penury of the East." The Walker amendment was agreed to by two majority. Mr. Crittenden wished to make the mode of admission definite. If it was the intention of Congress to admit Texas by treaty, let it say so; if by resolution, let it say so; and not leave the mode discretionary with the President. He moved an amendment to that effect; but his motion was lost by a single vote.

Mr. Miller of New Jersey moved to strike out the House resolution, and insert in substance the bill which Mr. Benton had introduced early in the session; and he expressed the hope



that the senator from Missouri would support it, and "not destroy his own child." But that senator, having yielded to the influences at work, promptly and ostentatiously responded, "I'll kill it stone-dead!" This declaration was vociferously applauded by the galleries. This sudden change in Mr. Benton's position was rendered more significant from his previous course, his determined and violent opposition to the measure. He had declared it "an act of unparalleled outrage on Mexico," of which he "washed his hands." Indeed, he had been regarded by both friend and foe as holding the fate of the measure at his disposal. But notwithstanding all his antecedents, his positive and dogmatic assertion, so characteristic of the man, he weakly yielded to, if he did not fabricate, the specious but shallow device proposed by Walker.

Mr. Tyler was known to be fiercely intent on annexation, and this device gave him absolute power to consummate the act during the few remaining days of his administration. The unwritten history of that transaction may never be fully known, and the actual influences which induced the somersault of the veteran senator may never be revealed. Without such explanation, however, there was in it the not infrequent or unprecedented occurrence that a Southern slaveholder, in the presence of an assumed necessity of slavery, allowed that necessity to be paramount, and to override all other considerations. The amendment proposed by Mr. Miller received but eleven votes, and the Joint Resolution was then adopted by a majority of two. The House hastened to concur by a majority of more than fifty.

In the House four Whigs voted for the measure. Of that number was Alexander H. Stephens, who afterward joined the Democracy, became vice-president of the Confederacy, whose "corner-stone" he declared slavery to be, and who continued to maintain its principles, though they had been so signally overborne and overthrown by the valor and vote of the nation. In the Senate, Merrick of Maryland, Henderson of Mississippi, and Johnson of Louisiana, also Whigs, voted for it avowedly because it was a measure essentially Southern in its character and purposes, and tended to promote domestic

tranquillity in the States they represented. But the large majority of the Southern Whigs steadily opposed and cast their votes against the Joint Resolution. Nor was their stand maintained without personal sacrifice and hazard. Indeed there were none, not even the friends of freedom, who were more sorely tried than were the better and more thoughtful portion of the Southern Whigs. For they not only felt a sectional pressure and saw agencies at work which threatened party disruption and defeat, but they wisely dreaded the effects of these violent and revolutionary proceedings upon the nation, and even upon slavery itself.

Claiming fealty to Southern institutions, and disavowing all sympathy with abolitionism, they based their opposition to the scheme on constitutional grounds and those of expediency. They denied the right of admitting foreign territory by legislative resolution, and protested against the bill as a clear and palpable violation of the Constitution of the United States. This position was ably argued by the Virginia senators, Archer and Rives, both of whom, in the words of the first, "lifted a determined though unavailing voice against this blow of parricide struck at the Constitution"; the latter declaring it to be "a dangerous and revolutionary precedent." Of their position Mr. Berrien of Georgia, while claiming to "stand on Southern ground and in vindication of Southern rights," said that they stood "unmoved, immovable, resting on its own firm foundation like some giant rock against which the waves of the ocean break in their fury only to be thrown back in their impotence." He declared also that the acquisition of Texas in this unconstitutional manner would be "at the sacrifice of the peace and harmony of the Union." "The feeling," he said, "which will be aroused in vast multitudes of that people, by what they will deem a flagrant usurpation of power which they have never delegated, is too deep, too strong, too abiding to be repressed; and it may not be sported with. The power of the government cannot check it. The patronage of the government will not seduce it. Nay, the iron rule of party, that image of omnipotence here below, will not, cannot control it."

Characterizing the correspondence of Secretaries Upshur

and Calhoun "as a deplorable humiliation of diplomatic character in the eyes of the world," Mr. Rayner of North Carolina said that by putting the annexation of Texas so squarely on the slavery issue, the South had been driven from its "impregnable position" that slavery was an institution that neither Congress nor the people of the North could constitutionally interfere with. "If we admit," he said, "that the general government can interpose to extend slavery as a blessing, we must also admit that it can interfere to arrest it as an evil." Avowing himself as an unqualified advocate of Southern interests and ready to "hang an Abolitionist without the form of trial for disseminating his hellish doctrines," he said he scorned to ask of the North any other aid than the performance of its constitutional obligations. He expressed his great regret that the Whigs had not presented an unbroken phalanx in opposition to the measure, and he predicted that this sudden change of front in face of the enemy would prove fatal to the party.

The Joint Resolution was approved on the 2d of March. The next day, President Tyler despatched a messenger to Texas to secure her assent, which, like the executive approval, was but too readily given; and thus was consummated the scheme audaciously conceived, skilfully planned, boldly and persistently prosecuted, and successfully accomplished.

Twenty-three Democratic members of the House had voted against the passage of the Joint Resolution. All but three or four, however, voted for concurring with the Senate in the Walker amendment. Their votes were a surprise and a regret. It will ever remain a marvel that honest and intelligent men could have been caught by a device so transparent. Surely they were not surprised when Mr. Tyler eagerly accepted the power thus given him, and at once secured for his administration the coveted honor which he had so long and so earnestly sought.

This vote of the House, concurring in the Senate amendment, ended the contest. It was taken on the evening of the 28th of February. On its announcement, it was hailed with every demonstration of uproarious delight, by bonfires, illu-



minations, and volleys of artillery, by social revelry and mutual congratulations. The scrip-holders, land-jobbers, and flesh-jobbers gloated over their anticipated profits, the slaveholding chiefs over their grandest victory, and the Democratic leaders, but too well assured, over the prospect of long-continued ascendancy. Amid these flashing lights and jubilant sounds there were, however, thoughtful men whose hearts throbbed heavily over that new dishonor to the nation and the darkening future of their country. The fearless and ever-faithful Giddings gave expression to the thoughts and feelings of thousands of his countrymen, as he thus described his emotions on the evening of that fatal day. "Pensively and alone," said he, "the writer walked to his lodgings. Never before had he viewed his country as he then saw it. The exultation of slave-breeders and slave-dealers, at thus controlling the Congress of the United States, constituted a spectacle that he had not expected to witness. The barbarous war, the bloodshed, the devastation, the corruption, and the civil war which resulted from this triumph of the Slave Power were, at no subsequent period of his life, more vividly before his mind than they were that evening, while alone in his room, contemplating the results that would naturally follow the action of Congress on that sad day."

## CHAPTER XLIV.

VERMONT AND MASSACHUSETTS. — JOHN P. HALE. — CASSIUS M. CLAY.

Action of Vermont and Massachusetts. — Massachusetts Anti-Texas Convention. — Proscriptive Policy of the New Administration. — John P. Hale. — Address to his Constituents. — Denounced by the Democrats of New Hampshire. — His Nomination withdrawn. — Appeal to the People. — "Independent Democrats." — The State canvassed by Mr. Hale. — Speeches of Hale and Pierce. — Coalition between the Whigs and Independent Democrats. — The Democracy defeated. — Mr. Hale elected United States Senator. — Brave Fight in the Senate. — Cassius M. Clay. — Opposes the Annexation of Texas. — Visits the Northern States. — Advocates the Election of Mr. Clay. — Returns to Kentucky. — Issues an Address to the People. — Establishes the "True American." — Boldly denounces Slaveholding. — Exasperation of Slaveholders. — They demand the Suppression of the Paper. — Refusal to comply with the Demand. — The Paper forcibly suppressed. — Mr. Clay appeals to the People. — Re-establishes his Paper.

SEVERAL State legislatures had passed resolutions against the annexation of Texas. Those of Vermont and Massachusetts were among the first to express opposition to the growing demands of the Slave Power. They had vindicated the right of petition and freedom of debate; pronounced in favor of the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia, the prohibition of the coastwise slave-trade, and of slavery in the Territories; and against the annexation of Texas, and the admission of any more slave States. Indeed, for several years their voice had been clear and distinct in behalf of freedom.

The uncompromising, aggressive, and persistent action of the Abolitionists, the brave fight of John Quincy Adams in Congress for the right of petition and of the freedom of debate, and the clearly pronounced sentiments of her legislature, had placed Massachusetts not only in a conspicuous, but in a

leading, position among her sister States. This was acknowledged by friend and foe, — by the first with hope and trust, by the latter with hatred and hostility. The Democratic party, however, though at first joining in resistance to slaveholding demands, had early yielded to the seductive influences of power, while the Whigs continued firmly to maintain their position. The latter had proclaimed their unalterable determination to resist the consummation of the Texan scheme, and had fought with unity and vigor the presidential contest of 1844, upon which its immediate fate depended. But, after the defeat of Mr. Clay and the popular triumph of the friends of annexation, defections in the Whig party began to manifest themselves.

When the legislature assembled in 1845, Governor Briggs called attention to the impending danger of annexation. Resolutions were promptly reported by Joseph Bell, a lawyer of eminence and a gentleman of conservative opinions, denying the constitutional power of Congress to annex a foreign nation by legislation ; declaring that such act of annexation would have no binding effect upon the people of Massachusetts ; and affirming that she “ will never consent, where she is not already bound, to place her own free sons on any other basis than that of perfect equality with freemen ; and, last of all, and more than all, she will never by any act or deed give her consent to the further extension of slavery to any portion of the world.”

These unequivocal declarations received the emphatic indorsement of a four-fifths vote in the House. When they came up for consideration in the Senate, Mr. Wilson of Middlesex County moved an amendment to the effect that, if Texas should be admitted by a legislative act, that act could and ought to be repealed at the earliest possible moment. After an earnest debate, that amendment was rejected by a vote of twenty-four to eight ; in the minority were Charles Francis Adams, Linus Child, and Nathaniel B. Borden. The resolutions were then unanimously adopted.

Nor were the protestations of the people of Massachusetts confined to these declarations of her legislature. A State convention, called by gentlemen of capacity, experience, and large



influence, without distinction of party, was held on the 29th of January, in Faneuil Hall. It was large in numbers and strong in talent and character. All portions of the Commonwealth were represented by delegates differing widely in opinions on other subjects, but going to Faneuil Hall in the spirit of self-devotion worthy of the cause that brought them together. John M. Williams, an aged and venerable jurist, presided. An address of great vigor and force, portions of which were dictated by Mr. Webster, was prepared by Charles Allen of Worcester, and Stephen C. Phillips of Salem. It was unanimously adopted by the convention and widely circulated.

Referring to the grave issues involved in annexation, to a war that, it seemed, must inevitably follow the adoption of the Joint Resolution, which had already passed the House, it expressed the hope that the day might "never dawn which shall behold the glorious flag of this Union borne on foreign battlefields to sustain in the name of liberty the supremacy of its eternal foe." It affirmed that "Massachusetts denounces the iniquitous project in its inception and in every stage of its progress, its means and its end, and all the purposes and pretences of its authors."

An anti-Texas committee was appointed, for the purpose of making an earnest, and, if possible, successful effort to combine and make effective the public sentiment of the free States against the consummation of a scheme known to be wicked in its purpose, corrupt in its means, dishonorable in its character, and believed to be disastrous in its consequences.

The discussions were marked by great freedom, earnestness, solemnity, and determination. Thoughtful men filled the hall. Speakers and hearers partook of a common sentiment. They realized as never before the imminence of the impending calamity, the gravity of the occasion, and the pregnant issues of the hour. But these speeches, eloquent and graphic as they were, rather increased than diminished the feeling of public danger and impotency which pervaded that assembly, so that, when the illusive battle-cry of "repeal" was raised by Linus Child, a sense of relief ran through the hall, and a gleam of light seemed to illumine the darkness of the immediate future.

While the struggle for the annexation of Texas by Joint Resolution was in progress, the friends of that measure left no means untried which political chicanery or menace could suggest. The President elect made no concealment of his purpose; and it was distinctly understood that those Democrats who opposed the measure had little to expect from his administration. Even those in New York who had signed the secret circular which alone made Mr. Polk's election possible were soon made to feel the force of that displeasure which the Slave Power usually inflicted on those who resisted its authority.

But its immediate and most marked demonstration was in New Hampshire, and John P. Hale was its first victim. Though at first successful, its ultimate results were disastrous to the cause and party which prompted it. For it placed Mr. Hale in a far more commanding position than he had ever occupied before, and gave his ready tongue a voice and an audience it could never otherwise have obtained, besides affording an example of successful resistance to partisan tyranny and slaveholding dictation greatly damaging to their pretentious and hitherto unquestioned supremacy.

Mr. Hale, then a member of the House of Representatives, had been nominated by the Democratic party for re-election. But he had not, like the great body of that party, forgotten its strong anti-Texas testimonies; nor would he, at the bidding of the convention which overslaughed Mr. Van Buren and nominated Mr. Polk, or in the hope of the prospective patronage of the incoming administration, disown that record, and applaud what a few short weeks before had been so vociferously condemned.

Compelled to define his position, he did not hesitate to reaffirm his opposition to the scheme, and to vote against it, though he regarded that declaration and vote as his political death-warrant; a martyrdom from which he evidently expected no resurrection. Indeed, he at once made his arrangements to retire from public life, and to resume his profession in the city of New York; a purpose from which he was with some difficulty dissuaded.

What he apprehended soon transpired. Such honesty of

purpose, such fealty to right, such contumacy to party discipline could not be tolerated in the ranks of the exacting Democracy of that State. Early in January Mr. Hale addressed to his constituents a letter on the annexation of Texas. It was an earnest and unequivocal condemnation of the scheme. The reasons given by its advocates in support of the measure he declared to be "eminently calculated to provoke the scorn of earth and the judgment of Heaven"; and he avowed that he could never consent, by any agency of his, to place the country in the attitude of annexing a foreign nation for the avowed purpose of sustaining and perpetuating slavery.

At once the leading Democratic presses of New Hampshire and of the country opened upon him a war of denunciation, calling upon his constituents to rebuke and silence him. The Democratic State Committee immediately issued a call for a convention at Concord on the 12th of February. Franklin Pierce, who had been distinguished in Congress for his fidelity to the Slave Power, addressed the meeting, sharply and bitterly criticising this independent action of Mr. Hale, and defending the policy of annexation. He admitted that he would rather have Texas annexed as free territory, but he exclaimed, "Give it to us with slavery, rather than not have it, and have it now." And such an avowal was consistently applauded by the same convention which had just voted down, by "an emphatic No," the proposition that the meeting should be opened with prayer.

Stephen S. Foster, being present, inquired if he might be permitted "to set the speaker right in a few of his misstatements." A violent clamor at once arose against permission. The chairman decided that none but delegates could speak; and Mr. Foster took his seat, with the declaration: "I consider myself, in common with every man in the house, insulted by the remarks of the gentleman who has just taken his seat." And that convention of the same party which had a few months before pronounced against the annexation scheme, and whose chief organ had declared it to be "black as ink and bitter as hell," at once changed front on this very issue, and by a unanimous vote struck Mr. Hale's name from



the ticket on which it had so recently inscribed it, and placed in its stead that of an obscure politician.

But many of Mr. Hale's constituents were more hopeful than their leader; at least, they were less resigned and less disposed to submit to defeat and death. Under the lead of Amos Tuck, who had already taken an active part in giving expression and direction to the popular disfavor against such high-handed tyranny, they at once prepared for action. In consequence of their earnest and vigorous proceedings, even without much aid from Mr. Hale, who deemed all resistance to the decrees of the party hopeless, the Democratic candidate lacked a thousand votes of a majority. While this result surprised and exasperated the Democratic leaders, it greatly encouraged Mr. Hale and his friends. Stimulated by their success, and continuing the struggle with increased determination and vigor, they established at the State capital the "Independent Democrat," under the editorial control of George G. Fogg. It was conducted with signal ability and tact, rendered essential service, and contributed largely to the triumph of this first successful revolt against the iron despotism of the Slave Power.

In the next election Mr. Hale participated. He canvassed the State, delivering speeches, in which he brought into full play the capacities and characteristics of his peculiar, versatile, and popular eloquence. Great excitement pervaded the State, and crowds thronged to hear him. But the Democratic leaders were indignant at his continued contumacy, and deeply chagrined at his manifest success with the people. These feelings found voice at a meeting held at the capital the first week of June. During that week the legislature commenced its session, and the religious and benevolent associations of the State held their anniversaries. Mr. Hale was expected to address a meeting at the Old North Church. Unwilling that his speech should be heard, as it probably would be, by the political and religious representatives of the State then assembled, the Democratic leaders determined that it should be replied to on the spot. Franklin Pierce was selected for that purpose. Aware that he was addressing many men of large

intelligence and influence, and that his words would be sharply criticised by him under whose lead his name had been stricken from the ticket, Mr. Hale spoke with calmness, dignity, and effect. Those who listened to him could not but feel, whether they agreed with him or not, that he had been actuated by conscientious convictions and a high sense of public duty.

Mr. Pierce had noted, with the quick instincts of an adroit politician, the marked effects produced by Mr. Hale's manly and temperate vindication of his principles and position. Evidently in a towering passion, he spoke under the deepest excitement. He was domineering and insulting in manner, and bitter and sarcastic in the tone and tenor of his remarks. Mr. Hale replied briefly, but pertinently and effectively. He closed his triumphant vindication of his motives, opinions, and purposes against the aspersions of his bitter enemy with these words: "I expected to be called ambitious, to have my name cast out as evil, to be traduced and misrepresented. I have not been disappointed. But if things have come to this condition, that conscience and a sacred regard for truth and duty are to be publicly held up to ridicule, and scouted at without rebuke, as has just been done here, it matters little whether we are annexed to Texas or Texas is annexed to us. I may be permitted to say that the measure of my ambition will be full if my earthly career shall be finished and my bones are laid beneath the soil of New Hampshire, and, when my wife and children shall repair to my grave to drop the tear of affection to my memory, they may read on my tombstone: 'He who lies beneath surrendered office and place and power, rather than bow down and worship slavery.'"

At the second election the Democratic candidate lacked some fifteen hundred votes necessary to an election. Several other attempts were made, in which the "Independent Democrats," though they failed of electing their own, succeeded in defeating the Democratic candidate, and in holding the balance of power. In the election of 1846, Mr. Hale was chosen a member of the legislature, was made Speaker, and subsequently elected to the Senate of the United States. The State was then subdivided into congressional districts, and Mr. Tuck was

nominated to fill the seat Mr. Hale had occupied in the national House of Representatives. As a majority of votes was necessary for an election, no choice was effected during the whole of the XXIXth Congress. But in July, 1847, by a coalition between the Whigs and "Independent Democrats" in the first and third districts, Mr. Tuck was chosen in the former and General James Wilson in the latter. Mr. Tuck served six years in Congress, and made an honorable record. His chief distinction, and perhaps his chief service, however, grew out of his bold and wise leadership in that first and successful assault upon the party which had for years controlled the State with iron sway; beating down the very Gibraltar of the Northern Democracy, and making it one of the leading and most reliable States in opposition to the Slave Power.

And if merit is due to any actors in the great struggle now under review, surely no inconsiderable share belongs to those who, in that dark night, dared to beard the lion in his Northern lair, and strike for freedom with the odds so fearfully against them. Nor is the nation's debt of gratitude to Mr. Hale small for his long, brave fight in the Senate, against the scorn and contumely of the slaveholding majority. For if he did not then proclaim the full and perfect evangel of liberty, his was certainly the voice of one crying in the wilderness, preparing the way of complete deliverance. As his successful resistance to party and slaveholding tyranny broke the spell of its assumed invincibility, and encouraged others to go and do likewise, so his ready eloquence and wit, his brilliant repartee and unfailing good-humor, did much to familiarize the country with the subject, and to call attention to its facts and principles, which perhaps a sterner advocate would have failed to effect.

While Mr. Hale was making his gallant and successful fight in New Hampshire, by which he placed himself at once among the foremost advocates of liberty, freedom found another champion, on the very soil of slavery itself, in the person of Cassius M. Clay. Belonging to an eminent family, reared under the influences of slavery, he was identified with it by birth, inheritance, and position. From personal knowledge and his affilia-



tions of family, party, and business, he had spoken during the presidential canvass of 1844 with authority upon the subject of slavery, revealing to thousands the inner life and workings of the system.

Mr. Clay was a native of Kentucky. Educated at Yale, he had soon learned to recognize the difference between the slave and the free States, while the antislavery discussions that were rife during his stay in New England greatly excited his feelings and changed his sentiments; and at an early day he determined to emancipate his slaves. Entering the Kentucky legislature in 1835, he at once introduced and became the champion of a common-school system for his native State. But he soon learned that such a system was incompatible with the presence and power of slavery wherever the latter was established, and was giving tone to the thought and feeling of society.

In 1841 an act was introduced into that legislature for the repeal of a law adopted in 1833 to prevent the importation of slaves into the State. He, of course, arrayed himself against the repeal, and denounced in fitting language this reactionary measure. Such a demonstration from one occupying his position naturally excited surprise, and provoked that kind and style of opposition in which the slave-masters were accustomed to indulge toward any who opposed their policy or condemned their cherished system. But he declared that denunciation could not silence him; that epithets and the cry of abolition had no terrors for him; and that bowie-knives, pistols, and mobs could not force him to desist. He said that his blood was ready for the sacrifice, though he warned gentlemen that he should not be "a tame victim of either force or denunciation." He affirmed that there was a party in the country which was the advocate of perpetual slavery, and in favor of destroying the Union. He protested against what he termed the treasonable scheme of the disunionists; and he asserted that on the day when this should be seriously attempted or consummated there should be "one Kentuckian shrouded under the stars and stripes; one heart undesecrated with the faith that slavery is the basis of civil liberty; one being who could not

exist in a government denying the right of petition, the liberty of speech and of the press ; one man who would not be the outlaw of nations or the slave of a slave."

Entertaining such sentiments, and believing that the proposed annexation of Texas was for "the extension of slavery among men," he interposed a most determined opposition. In a speech in December, 1843, in reply to ex-Vice-President Richard M. Johnson, he made an impassioned appeal to the people of Kentucky to enter their solemn protest against this most unholy scheme. He reminded them, if this project was carried out for the purposes for which it was formed, they could no longer cover themselves, when reproached for the existence of slavery, under the plea that it was an entailed evil for which they could not be held responsible. If they supported this scheme, with this the real and avowed object, they would commit themselves anew to the system it was thus proposed to strengthen and extend.

Holding these ideas of annexation, and deeply impressed with the magnitude of the interests at stake and the gravity of the impending peril, he entered with great earnestness into the presidential contest of 1844. He traversed the free States, urging the claims of Henry Clay. He was specially urgent that antislavery men should give him their votes, as the only way by which annexation could be prevented. Affirming that Mr. Clay had virtually pledged himself to oppose the admission of Texas, by making the conditions of his support such as could not be fulfilled, he contended that they themselves held the power in their hands to prevent it. Among those conditions was the "common consent of the Union." "So long, then," he said, in one of his speeches, "as the vestal flame of liberty shall burn in your bosoms, eternal and inextinguishable, so long is Mr. Clay, three several times, in the most solemn manner, before the nation and all mankind, irrevocably bound to oppose the annexation of Texas to the United States." "Of all men," he continued, "now present I have the greatest cause to take care that I am not deceived in this matter ; but I can go — I say it before God and man — with a good conscience for him, because I believe it will save my

country from ruin if we shall secure his election." His labors in the canvass were arduous, his feelings were deeply enlisted in the issues at stake, and his consequent disappointment in view of defeat was very great.

The defeat of Mr. Clay, however, while it made annexation certain, did not discourage him. His spirit rose with the occasion, and his purpose to war against the cause of all this scheming and plotting seemed to be strengthened. Returning to Kentucky, he issued, in January, 1845, an address to the people of his State, in which he portrayed the baleful effects of slavery, even upon that "young and beautiful Commonwealth," to whose "Italian skies" and "more than Sicilian verdure" he mournfully referred as being blighted and clouded by this terrible curse. "Her fields," he says, "relapse into primitive sterility; her population wastes away, manufactures recede from her infected border, trade languishes, decay trenches upon her meagre accumulations of taste or utility, gaunt famine stalks into the portals of the homestead, sullen despair begins to display itself in the careworn faces of men, the heavens and the earth cry aloud, the eternal laws of happiness and existence have been trampled underfoot. . . . Agriculture drags along its slow pace with slovenly, ignorant, and reckless labor. Science, literature, and art are strangers here. Poets, historians, artists, and machinists; the lovers of the ideal, the great, the beautiful, the true, and the useful,—flourish where thought and action are untrammelled. . . . A loose and inadequate respect for the rights of property, of necessity, follows in the wake of slavery. Duelling, bloodshed, and lynch-law leave but little security to person. A general demoralization has corrupted the first minds in the nation, its hot contagion has spread among the whole people; licentiousness, crime, and bitter hate infest us at home; repudiation and the forcible propagandism of slavery is arraying against us the world in arms."

He urged upon them to choose delegates to a convention for amending the Constitution, and to repeat the attempt "until victory shall perch on the standard of the free."

While the struggle was in progress in both Congress and



the country for the expansion of slavery, he issued proposals for the establishment of a paper to advocate its "overthrow" in Kentucky. Its publication was commenced at Lexington, and on the 3d of June was issued the first number of the "True American." In it he discussed with great vigor the evils and remedies existing and proposed. The general tone and character of its utterances were very offensive to the slaveholders of the State, whose course he condemned, and whose interests, they felt, he was putting in peril. This indignation was specially increased and intensified by articles that appeared on the 12th of August, in which the writer referred not only to the general principles of the contest, but to certain contingencies and possibilities, and which very naturally and very greatly excited their ire.

In those articles not only was emancipation advocated, but the securing of the civil and political rights to the colored people was vindicated. The pride and selfishness of the slave-master, too, was referred to; and the charge was made that, in his esteem, national character, conscience of the people, and sense of duty weighed nothing against that pride and selfishness. The warning, too, was given that the Abolitionists were becoming quite as reckless as the slaveholders themselves; and, when provoked by injustice and wrong, they might manifest something of the same spirit. "It is in vain," it was said, "for the master to try to fence his dear slaves in from all intercourse with the great world, to create his little petty and tyrannical kingdom on his own plantation, and keep it for his exclusive reign. He cannot shut out the light of information any more than the light of heaven. It will penetrate all disguises, and shine upon the dark night of slavery. He must recollect that he is surrounded. The North, the East, the West, and the South border on him,—the free West-Indian, the free Mexican, the free Yankee, the more than free Abolitionists of his own country. Everything trenches upon his infected district, and the wolf looks calmly in upon his fold."

The slaveholders were greatly exasperated, too, by these words: "But we are told the enunciation of the soul-stirring principles of Revolutionary patriots is a lie; that slavery the

most unmitigated, the lowest, basest that the world has seen, is to be substituted forever for our better, more glorious, holier aspirations. The Constitution is torn and trampled underfoot, justice and good faith in a nation are divided, brute force is substituted in the place of high moral tone, all the great principles of national liberty which we inherited from our British ancestry are yielded up, and we are left without God or help in the world. When the great-hearted of our land weep, and the man of reflection maddens in the contemplation of our national apostasy, there are men, pursuing gain and pleasure, who smile with contempt and indifference at their appeals. But remember, you who dwell in marble palaces, that there are strong arms and fiery hearts and iron pikes in the streets, and panes of glass only between them and the silver plate on the board and the smooth-skinned woman on the ottoman. When you have mocked at virtue, denied the agency of God in the affairs of men, and made rapine your honeyed faith, tremble, for the day of retribution is at hand, and the masses will be avenged."

The establishment of such a paper by such a man, with views so radical and a purpose so determined, was naturally regarded by the slaveholders as a challenge to them to come to the defence of their cherished and menaced system. It was, therefore, doomed from the start. Probably no journal, however mildly and courteously conducted, that contemplated and advocated emancipation, would have remained unmolested. Certainly one with sentiments so decided and uncompromising might naturally expect resistance. It came in the form of a committee, which waited upon him on the 14th of August, while confined to a bed of sickness, requiring him to suspend the publication of his paper, "as," they say in their note, "its further continuance, in our judgment, is dangerous to the peace of the community, and to the safety of our homes and families."

His reply was very decided and defiant. Alluding to the phrase in their letter that they had "been appointed as a committee on the part of a number of the respectable citizens of the city of Lexington," he wrote: "I say, in reply to your

assertion that you are a committee appointed by a 'respectable' portion of the community, that it cannot be true. Traitors to the laws and Constitution cannot be deemed respectable by any but assassins, pirates, and highway robbers." After reminding them that their meeting was unknown to the laws and Constitution, and that its "proceedings" were secret, and its purposes were "in direct violation of every known principle of honor, religion, or government," he added: "I treat them with the burning contempt of a brave heart and a loyal citizen. I deny their power and defy their action. . . . Your advice with regard to my personal safety is worthy of the source whence it emanated, and meets with the same contempt from me which the purposes of your mission excite. Go, tell your secret conclave of cowardly assassins that Cassius M. Clay knows his rights, and how to defend them."

He then issued an appeal to the people of Kentucky to stand by him in his conflict with the enemies of law in the defence of the civil and political rights of all. On the 18th of August a meeting was called to consider the question of suppressing the "True American." To this meeting he sent a communication, in which he endeavored to remove some false constructions which had been placed upon the articles in question, and in which he made some further statements concerning the purposes and plans of his paper, concluding with the solemn and unequivocal averment that his constitutional rights he should never "abandon."

The meeting, unmoved by his appeal, proceeded to the consummation of the purpose for which it was convened, by choosing a committee of sixty, which proceeded to the office of the offending journal, boxed up its press, and sent it out of the State. It also unanimously adopted an address to the people of Kentucky, reported by Thomas F. Marshall. In this address it was charged that a formidable party had arisen in the North which held that slavery was "opposed to religion, morals, and law," and that the negro was entitled to his freedom. It asserted, too, that the aim of this party was the abolition of slavery in America. It charged Mr. Clay with being in full sympathy with this party; that he had visited the North,



and, having been "received there in full communion by the abolition party, caressed and flattered and feasted, hailed in the stages of his triumphal progress by discharges of cannon, and heralded in the papers devoted to the cause as the boldest, the most intrepid, the most devoted of its champions, he returned to his native State, the organ and agent of an incendiary sect, to force upon her principles fatal to her domestic repose, at the risk of his own life and the peace of the community."

Stigmatizing an abolition paper in a slave State as a "nuisance of the most formidable character," a blazing brand in the hands of an incendiary or madman, which might scatter ruin, conflagration, revolution, crime unnamable over everything dear in domestic life, sacred in religion, or respectable in modesty, it denounced the "True American" as an example of the worst type of such papers. Representing Abolitionists as traitors to the Constitution, and abolition principles in a slave State as "fire in a magazine of powder," the address urged these considerations as the justification of its authors for the summary measures they adopted.

Mr. Clay also issued several appeals to the people of Kentucky, calling upon them to vindicate their rights, stricken down in his person. But though overpowered, he exhibited the same defiant spirit and unconquerable purpose, as he dedicated himself anew to the liberty of his country and of mankind, and called upon Americans to "rise up in the omnipotency of the ballot, and peaceably overthrow the slave despotism of the nation."

He re-established his paper, which, though published in Lexington, was printed in Cincinnati. But when the war with Mexico opened, he, to the great regret of many and the sharp censures of others, entered the army; and, under the plea of standing by the flag of his country in the day of battle, volunteered his services for that most indefensible war. After his return he renewed and continued his warfare on slavery until it ceased to exist.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### TEXAS ADMITTED AS A SLAVE STATE.

Resolve of Antislavery Men to continue the Struggle. — Action of the Massachusetts Legislature. — Differences among leading Whigs. — Celebration of the 1st of August by the Abolitionists. — Anti-Texas Conventions held in Massachusetts. — Committee appointed. — Petitions against the Admission of Texas as a Slave State. — Meeting of Congress. — Presentation of Petitions. — Resolutions for the Admission as a State. — Speech of Mr. Rockwell. — Resolutions for Admission. — Considered in the Senate. — Protest of Mr. Webster. — Texas admitted. — Address of the Anti-Texas Committee. — Complete Victory of the Slave Power.

ANTISLAVERY men were humiliated, but not disheartened, by the success of the annexation plot. While they comprehended in some degree the fearful significance of that baleful triumph, and the purposes and power of the men who achieved it, they felt constrained by an imperative sense of the duty they owed their country and humanity to continue the struggle. Two days after the Joint Resolution had been approved by the President, Charles Francis Adams proposed, in the Senate of Massachusetts, the inquiry whether any further action should be taken. A few days afterward he reported from a special committee resolutions declaratory of the position and purposes of that Commonwealth. They affirmed that Massachusetts refused to acknowledge the act of annexation as binding or legal; that it put at hazard the predominance of the principles of liberty. When they came up for consideration, a motion was made by Mr. Clifford that they be laid upon the table. But this motion received but five votes, and the resolutions were then adopted by both Houses. It was evident, however, that a portion of the Whig party gave them a reluctant support.

On the 4th of March, Mr. Wilson introduced an order requesting the Committee on the Judiciary to report a bill

making it a penal offence to surrender a slave escaping from Texas and taking refuge in Massachusetts. Mr. Lawrence of Hampshire County reported against the proposed legislation. The report was sustained by himself and other senators, on the ground that no action was required, that it was a question to be determined by the courts whenever a case contemplated by the order should arise.

Mr. Wilson moved to recommit the report with instructions. He would, he said, provide by law that the moment a man held as a slave in Texas stepped upon the soil of Massachusetts, his liberty should be as sacred as his life. He would make it a high crime to molest him, and he would treat him as a felon who should make the attempt. Massachusetts had proclaimed that the Joint Resolution admitting Texas should have no binding force upon her. Whether constitutional or not, Texas would instantly demand the guaranties of the Constitution. He would "meet the issue at once, and declare that the soil of Massachusetts should not be the Texan slaveholder's hunting-ground. The panting fugitive from that region should find in Massachusetts a city of refuge, and his pursuing master a felon's cell. Everything indicated an impending struggle between freedom and slavery that would absorb the mighty energies of the nation; and in that contest it was fit that Massachusetts should lead." But the motion failed, and the adverse report was then accepted.

When the legislature adjourned in the spring of 1845, there were marked indications of a wide divergence touching slavery among the leading Whigs of the Commonwealth. After the defeat of Mr. Clay, a portion of the wealthy and influential members of the party, especially those connected with the commercial, manufacturing, and monetary interests of the State, positively refused to take part in the efforts made to defeat annexation, or to prevent the admission of Texas as a slaveholding State. When the call for the anti-Texas meeting in Faneuil Hall was circulated in the legislature by Mr. Wilson, ex-Governor Lincoln, then president of the Senate, and several other members of the party, peremptorily refused to affix their names to it. They said that they had fought annexation so



long as it was an open question, and they had been defeated by the Abolitionists who withheld their votes from Mr. Clay. Abbott Lawrence and Nathan Appleton, representative men, and especially influential with the manufacturing interest, took no part in that meeting. It was well understood, too, that ex-Governor Davis, Mr. Winthrop, and several other eminent Whigs did not concur in that action, and manifested much coldness towards those who did. On the 4th of July, when the feelings of grief and indignation were fresh in the hearts of the people, and their murmurs still filled the air, Mr. Winthrop took occasion, in Faneuil Hall, to give utterance to the sentiment, "Our country, however bounded," which was understood to be the expression of his acceptance of the result, and a tacit rebuke of those of his political associates who did not readily acquiesce in the same policy.

Though Texas had promptly accepted the conditions of annexation, and her territory had become an integral portion of the Republic, she was not actually a State of the Union. The free States had a majority of fifty in the House of Representatives. Why should not another stand be made for freedom and the country? The defection of so many of their leaders in the political and commercial circles, and their readiness to acquiesce in the great iniquity, was indeed disheartening and ominous. But they were not the majority, and it was hoped they did not represent it. It was certainly worth the trial for the chance of defeating a nefarious project even at the last moment and, at the same time, for the opportunity of ascertaining whether the same appliances which had debauched and subdued the government had corrupted and conquered the people.

Nor was there a more fitting field in which that trial could be inaugurated than Massachusetts. Though the efforts were crowned with no great success, and few in other States seemed disposed to join in the attempt, there is a mournful satisfaction in tracing the steps of those earnest men who would bow to nothing but the inevitable, and yield only when resistance was manifest folly. There was something heroic in the closing though ineffectual struggles of that great conflict. And if readers are sometimes tempted to smile at their bold, defiant,

and hopeful words, with so feeble a following, and a foe in front rampant with victory, audacious in his insolence, with a nation at his beck, a little study of the situation will change that feeling to sympathy as they consider how hopeless was the task those brave men were undertaking, how absolutely "forlorn" was the hope they were attempting to lead.

On the 1st of August, the anniversary of West India emancipation, several meetings were held by the Abolitionists of Massachusetts. The recent crime of the Slave Power, which had insulted the reason and outraged the patriotism and conscience of the antislavery men of the North, contributed not only to increase their numbers but greatly to deepen their interest. At the meeting in Dedham Mr. Garrison presided. Pungent, vigorous, and eloquent speeches were made by himself, Theodore Parker, and Edmund Quincy.

A large meeting was held at Leicester, which was addressed by Samuel May, Jr. In a speech full of faith and hope in the ultimate triumph of the cause of emancipation, although the omens in that hour of defeat were far from auspicious, he said that they had come together to acquire new courage and zeal in their warfare. He would have their faith increased in moral power and in the living truth of Christ, and he would send "forth words of instruction, exhortation, and rebuke, until Slavery utters her last groan, and expires, never to know a resurrection."

Wendell Phillips, in reply to the oft-repeated assertion that the church was right in nine cases out of ten, and that slavery was but "one case," referred to the fact that one sixth of the population of the country was now held as property, subject to the cruelest treatment and to the grossest outrages, and all unprotected by law or by public opinion. In such a condition of affairs he maintained that the church either remained silent, or, if it spoke at all, it denounced the friends of the slave as infidels. "I will not," he said, "have for mine the Christianity of this land, with its negro pew in the corner of every church, and its negro hate in the corner of every heart. And yet I am a Christian. I hang all my hopes on the faith of my fathers; and I should feel myself forever disgraced if I failed to rebuke

the moral dwarfs which have now come into our fathers' places."

On that day a large assemblage gathered at Waltham. Francis Jackson, president of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society, presided. The meeting was addressed by Jonathan Walker, who had been fined, imprisoned, and branded in the right hand for assisting slaves to escape in Florida. But in spite of all the barbarities which he had borne, he avowed that as long as life remained that "branded hand" should be raised against slavery. In response to the question, often asked, why Captain Walker broke the laws of Florida, John Weiss, then the Unitarian clergyman of Watertown, said that man was more than constitutions, and Christ was greater than Hancock or Adams. "Our Northern apathy," he truly said, "heated the iron, forged the manacles, and built the pillory." William Henry Channing, in a speech of graceful eloquence and beauty, said that the republic was the child of promise, but slavery was denationalizing the people, and that it proclaimed itself autocrat and dictator. The Constitution, he said, had been tried and found to be an instrument of slaveholding usurpation, and the annexation of Texas absolved the people from its support.

Rev. Caleb Stetson agreed with Mr. Channing that the bond of union had been broken, but the government of Massachusetts was under the rule of the cotton aristocracy, and if "the fiery cross was raised the people would prove recreant." William I. Bowditch, in a thoughtful and temperate speech, urged the friends of the slave to apply the great reformatory principle of love to the slaveholder. "Let us," he also said, "fearlessly and constantly extend the principle of human brotherhood to the despised and oppressed slave, and let us here solemnly pledge ourselves to follow out these great principles, and resolve, Constitution or no Constitution, custom or no custom, that nothing shall ever induce us to acquiesce in or tolerate slavery."

Mr. Wilson, then a senator from Middlesex County, said that the calamity and disgrace of annexation had come upon the country through the treachery of Northern men; that even the representative of Concord and Lexington had proved recreant.



To the question what should be done, he said, "Act; hold meetings in every district, town, and county of the State. Oppose the admission of Texas into the Union as a slaveholding State, and appeal to the people of the free States to arrest the consummation of the great iniquity. Say to the men of the South, 'You are warring against civilization, against humanity, against the noblest feelings of the heart, the holiest impulses of the human soul, and the providence of God; and the conflict must ultimately end in your defeat.'"

Ralph Waldo Emerson said that it was the office of power to protect, to help, to preserve; and that it was the ruin of power to oppress and injure. It was the property of government to govern, of the sun to shine, of moral power to strengthen, raise, and refine. The Persian poet has said, "Beware of the cries of the orphan, for his cries reach the throne of the Almighty." The oppressed had the power to destroy prosperity and overturn stately edifices. Those who hoped and trusted were ever proved right, and he would have Massachusetts take the attitude of "a sublime patience," and trust "in principle, honor, and justice, rather than in the combinations of physical power." On the motion of Mr. Bowers of Concord, afterward a captain in the civil war, a committee was appointed to make arrangements for a meeting, to be held on the third Wednesday of August, to protest against the admission of Texas as a State. As no action was taken by the committee, the meeting was not held.

Early in September, Mr. Wilson, who had been appointed one of its members, prepared a call and obtained the signatures of a large number of gentlemen of character and influence for a meeting to be held at Concord, on the 22d of that month, to "take into consideration the encroachments of the Slave Power, and recommend such action as justice and patriotism shall dictate to resist those encroachments and arrest the progress of events so rapidly tending to that fearful consummation when slavery shall have complete control over the policy of the government and the destinies of the country." Men of all parties, sects, and pursuits were invoked to "devote one day to the country and the oppressed." "Let old

age," it said, "with its garnered treasures of wisdom and experience, be there; let manhood in its maturity and vigor be there; let youth with its high hopes and aspirations be there,—to devise such measures and awaken such a spirit as shall free the country from the dominion, curse, and shame of slavery."

The convention was large, earnest, and united. Elisha Huntington, mayor of Lowell, and afterward lieutenant-governor of the State, presided, and Mr. Wilson reported a preamble and a series of resolutions. The preamble set forth the character of slavery and the aggressions of the Slave Power. It closed by "distinctly presenting the issue to the people of the free States of an unconditional and pusillanimous submission, or a determined and constitutional resistance." This paper had been prepared by Samuel Hunt, a Congregational clergyman, then a resident of Natick, who had always in the pulpit, in religious and political organizations, and at the ballot-box, acted for the slave and against the domination of his master.

The resolutions declared: "We solemnly announce our purpose to the South, and to the execution of that purpose we pledge ourselves to the country and before Heaven, that, rejecting all compromise, without restraint or hesitation, in our private relations and in our political organizations, by our voices and our votes, in Congress or out, we will use all practicable means for the extinction of slavery on the American continent." The resolutions were unanimously adopted, and a committee, of which E. Rockwood Hoar, afterward Attorney-General of the United States, was chairman, was appointed to confer with the general committee appointed by the anti-Texas Convention held in the preceding January in Faneuil Hall, and with other opponents of slavery and of annexation, to endeavor to have meetings held, and in other ways to organize an efficient resistance to the final consummation of that measure.

A letter was received from Charles Francis Adams, urging unity and concert of action. In the midst of doubts and discouragements, he said that he had but one single word of hope to present, and that word was "union." "Let the people,"

he said, "throughout the length and breadth of this great land, feel that without it their industry, their property, nay, even their lives and liberty, may in the course of time fall under the oligarchy of two hundred thousand owners of slaves."

A letter was also received from John G. Whittier. He said he was no blind worshipper of the Union, and as an Abolitionist he was shut out from its benefits. "But I see nothing," he said, "to be gained by an effort — necessarily limited, sectional, and futile — to dissolve it. The moral and political power requisite for doing it could far more easily abolish every vestige of slavery."

Conciliatory, earnest, and eloquent speeches were made by William A. White, Stephen C. Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, William Henry Channing, and other gentlemen. An adjourned meeting was held at Cambridgeport, which was well attended, and was addressed by several gentlemen. The convention then adjourned to meet in Lyceum Hall in Cambridge, and took measures to secure the attendance of the opponents of annexation from other sections of the State.

On the 21st of October the convention reassembled. Henry Wilson presided, and Colonel William Schouler acted as secretary. On taking the chair, Mr. Wilson made a hopeful appeal for prompt, bold, and united action. "Let us," he said, "at once take an advanced step against the Slave Power. Let us act and, as far as we have the constitutional right, go in favor of emancipation. Let us make it the cardinal doctrine of our creed, the sun of our system. Let us inscribe emancipation on the banners under which we rally in letters of light. Let us go to the country on that issue. We shall reach the heart and conscience of the people. They will come to the rescue, and we shall lay the foundations of an enduring triumph."

Mr. Garrison presented a resolution, asserting that it would be the constitutional duty of the legislature of Massachusetts promptly to declare that, if the illegal act of annexation should be consummated, it was null and void. Mr. Stetson affirmed that he would meet the issue of the admission of Texas as a slave State with an "everlasting No." Mr. Gar-



risson came to the meeting, he said, to learn the spirit of Middlesex, and not to give his own plans. As a peace man he had no difficulties. He would submit, but he would never sanction or acquiesce.

William A. White spoke with great earnestness and animation. "Let us go on," he said, "rallying the country as we go. Like those Spartans who passed the night of their resolution to sacrifice themselves for their country in prayer and song, and then went forth in the morning joyfully, though they knew it was to die, let us gladly devote ourselves to the salvation of our country."

Mr. Adams said it did not become them to speak in very strong terms, in view of the divided condition of the Commonwealth. "We fought the battle last year," he said, "and lost it; and I will not say why we lost it. But I will say that your own situation is owing to your own party divisions; and I will add that unless you can agree to act together, you will always be defeated in like manner. Look at Massachusetts, divided into I know not how many parties, and then look at the South, united in all that concerns slavery as the heart of one."

Wendell Phillips favored Mr. Garrison's resolutions, though Mr. Adams had declared that they could not be made the basis of union and action. "As long," he said, "as men lie in the lap of Delilah, they may be sure they will have their locks shorn. What cares the South for all you can do while under the sceptre?" He expressed a belief that disunion must come, as Calhoun wanted it at one end of the Union and Garrison wanted it at the other, "and it was written in the counsels of God."

Resolutions were reported by the business committee in favor of instructing the committee appointed at Concord, together with such members as might be appointed at that time, to correspond with individuals in different parts of the State with a view to calling county and State conventions. The convention urged unity and co-operation. During a recess a conference was held. Ellis Gray Loring was chairman, and Edmund Quincy was secretary. A large State committee was appointed, of which Charles Francis Adams was chairman. This committee at once entered upon its duties, an

address to the people was issued, a form of remonstrance against the admission of Texas as a slave State was sent to every part of the Commonwealth, and to other States. A weekly paper, called the "Texas Chain Breaker," edited by Elizur Wright, was established. Public meetings were held, and speeches of rare eloquence and power were delivered by some of the most gifted men of the Commonwealth. Petitions signed by tens of thousands were sent to this committee, and Henry Wilson and John G. Whittier were commissioned to carry them to Washington.

On the 4th of November Faneuil Hall was thronged by the citizens of Boston, to protest against the admission of Texas as a slave State. Charles Francis Adams presided. Resolutions drawn up by Charles Sumner were presented by John G. Palfrey. They distinctly set forth that annexation was sought for increasing the market in human flesh, for extending and perpetuating slavery, and for securing political power, and they protested against the admission of Texas as a slave State "in the name of God, of Christ, and of humanity." These resolutions were supported in earnest, learned, and eloquent speeches by Mr. Palfrey, Mr. Sumner, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Stanton, Mr. Hillard, Mr. Channing, and Mr. Garrison.

This was the first public participation of Mr. Sumner in that great conflict in which he subsequently bore a part so important and honorable. His speech and the resolutions from his pen were based on the fixed and indestructible principles of justice, humanity, and moral rectitude. Stating that the object of the meeting was to strengthen the hearts and hands of those opposed to the admission of Texas into the family of States, and referring to the voices of discouragement they heard, that all exertion would be in vain, he declared that their efforts could not fail to accomplish great good, as no act of self-sacrifice and devotion to duty can ever be without its reward. Such an act as theirs, he said, must ever stand as a landmark, and "future champions of equal rights and human brotherhood will derive new strength from these exertions." "Massachusetts," he said, "must continue foremost in the cause of freedom; nor can her children yield to dal-

liance with slavery. They must resist it at all times, and be forearmed against its fatal influence." He closed by expressing the hope that it might be hereafter among the praises of Massachusetts that "on this occasion she knew so well how to say 'No!'"

This attempt, however, to rally the people of Massachusetts and, if possible, of the free States, resulted in the most disheartening revelation of sentiments and purposes among the leaders and in the ranks of the Whig party. Indeed, little was found that was calculated to inspire courage and confidence. Prominent and honored members not only positively declined to take any part in the movement themselves, but discouraged the efforts of others. Abbott Lawrence, in his reply to the anti-Texas committee, said, "I have opposed the annexation of Texas, and continued my opposition so long as it was an open question. I deem further action on my part useless, as a majority of the people have decided in favor of annexation, and Texas now virtually composes a part of the Union." Nathan Appleton went still further. He referred to the fact that he saw among the parties engaged in the movement many who had distinguished themselves as Abolitionists; and he doubted whether the abolition movement was "reconcilable with duty under the Constitution." At any rate he thought it had produced nothing but evil, banded the South into a solid phalanx, exasperated the feelings of slaveholders, increased the severity of their slave laws, postponed the period of emancipation in the Northern slave States, and secured the election of Mr. Polk and the admission of Texas into the Union. "I cannot," he said, "take part in this Texas movement. For all practical purposes, as far as the people are concerned, I consider the question as settled. I have opposed it, and contributed funds to oppose it so long as there appeared a chance of preventing it. Massachusetts has done her duty, and her senators and representatives will continue to do theirs. Beyond that I cannot think it good policy to waste our efforts upon the impossible." These sentiments expressed the views and feelings of a large class of Massachusetts Whigs. Although no division took place at the State convention of that year, and its



resolutions were distinct and full in their condemnation of annexation, and of the continued aggressions of the Slave Power, it was seen and felt that there were radical differences in the party, and that a conflict was certain, and a rupture probable in the near future.

The XXIXth Congress met on the 1st of December, 1845. On the 10th Mr. Adams presented remonstrances from Massachusetts against the admission of Texas into the Union as a slave State, and moved their reference to a select committee. But the House, by a vote of one hundred and fifteen to seventy-two, laid them on the table. The next day a large number of similar memorials, signed by thousands, were presented by Mr. Adams and other members, but they shared the same fate.

On the 16th the House proceeded to the consideration of the Joint Resolution, reported by Mr. Douglas, chairman of the Committee on Territories, for the admission of Texas as a State into the Union. The previous question, with indecent haste, was immediately moved, and sustained by eighteen majority, and the bill ordered to a third reading by a majority of eighty-four. On its final passage, Mr. Julius Rockwell of Massachusetts, a member of the Committee on Territories, contrived to obtain the floor, and spoke earnestly and eloquently against it. He declared that amidst all the heat and dust, amidst all the misrepresentations, intrigues, and violent efforts to which the Texan question had given occasion, there stood out one honest feature on the part of the government, and that was the clear, distinct, and open avowal, that the motive was the preservation of domestic slavery. Massachusetts dissented from the measure on that very ground. She objected to annexation because that had been the purpose in urging it, and was likely to prove its actual effect. As one called to represent in part the people of his ancient Commonwealth, he must enter his "solemn protest against the extension of slavery, as an evil directed against the truest interests of his country; as militating directly against her prosperity and freedom, and darkening that national character which she ought to hold up to all nations and ages of the world; as being in

opposition to the Constitution which had preserved us hitherto in concord; as against the principles of the fathers of the republic, who lived themselves in slaveholding States, who would have saved us, if they could, from so great an evil, and who openly confessed that they trembled for their country when they remembered that God is just. The vote was then taken, and the resolution of admission was adopted by a majority of eighty-five. In that minority of fifty-six there were only three members of the Democratic party, Preston King, Bradford R. Wood, and Horace Wheaton, of the State of New York.

On the 22d of December Mr. Ashley of Arkansas reported to the Senate from the Judiciary Committee the House resolution, and that body proceeded at once to its consideration. Mr. Webster rose and declared that he had felt it to be his duty "steadily, uniformly, and zealously to oppose it." He closed his brief speech by saying: "I agree with the unanimous opinion of the legislature of Massachusetts; I agree with the great mass of her people; I reaffirm what I have said and written during the last years at various times against this annexation. I here record my own dissent and opposition; and I here express and place on record, also, the dissent and protest of the State of Massachusetts."

But all arguments were unavailing, and the protests, however impressively pronounced, by States or statesmen, could not avert the impending blow. The slaveholders had the "giant's strength," and they did not hesitate to "use it like a giant," however "tyrannous" it might appear. By a vote of thirty-one to fourteen the Joint Resolution was passed, and Texas became a State of the American Union. And the saddest page in this gloomy record, the bitterest ingredient in this cup of humiliation, was the large support the measure received from the free States. It seemed as if the demon of slavery had power over the souls as well as the bodies of men, and by his infernal sorceries had bound the one as completely as the other. But there were those who still had faith in God and in the power of truth, and who still believed that, in some way they were not able to forecast, this great wrong

would be righted and this haughty power be overborne. At any rate they meant to struggle on in the great endeavor, and hope in God for success.

The Massachusetts Anti-Texas Committee issued an address to the public. "Massachusetts," it said, "had done her part honestly, conscientiously, and manfully, to sustain the true principles of the Puritans of New England." Affirming that annexation had been accomplished by slavery, it said: "Slavery has corrupted liberty in her fountain seat; slavery has hardened the hearts of this generation of political leaders, so that they heed no warning except it should be a miracle from heaven. Slavery has infused its pestiferous venom into the veins of the body politic in the free States to such an extent that they see not what mere instruments of tyranny it is making of their people."

This address from the pen of Charles Francis Adams closed with the declaration: "The contest about Texas has been fought and lost, the Constitution trampled under foot, and the Spirit of Liberty is driven from her natural home; but unnumbered fields yet remain, each of which should be the subject of a greater contest than the last, until either the institution of slavery shall be overthrown, or else the Samson of the North, intoxicated by the cup of worldly prosperity, and enfeebled by his dalliance with the harlot, shall ultimately perish amidst the crumbling of the edifice which he had made for his protection."

Hitherto the government of the United States, in obedience to the exacting demands of slave-masters, had indeed been perverted from its original purpose to the antagonistic and degrading service of protecting and fostering domestic slavery. Now, in obedience to fresh demands, the nation had taken another and an advanced step, and had officially announced through its Secretary of State, the channel of communication with foreign governments, to England, France, and Mexico, that it looked with apprehension upon the extinction of slavery in a foreign nation, and demanded the annexation of that nation, to prevent its abolition there, and to strengthen it at home. Regardless of the opinion of the Christian and civilized world,



it had avowed these motives and principles of action. Nor were the means employed less reprehensible than the end proposed. There seemed, moreover, to have been a combination of circumstances, a fatality, not to say fatuity, of conduct, which conspired to facilitate and effect the result so pregnant with danger and dishonor.

The underlying cause of this complete victory of the Slave Power was unquestionably the inadequate conception by the people of the high and comprehensive duties of self-government. That was the weak and vulnerable point of the contest. Busy on their farms, in their work-shops, factories, and stores, masses of the people too often think they are fulfilling the duties of citizenship by sometimes voting at elections and patriotically observing the anniversary of national independence. Is it singular, then, that the clearest utterances, the most solemn warnings and earnest appeals, failed of evoking hearty and effective responses? Failing to comprehend, notwithstanding all that was spoken and written, the real iniquity of the Texas plot, many left that troublesome question to be solved by the political leaders at Washington, while they answered the demands of their business and grappled with the problems of their personal and domestic life. Perhaps in coming years juster views of personal responsibility will obtain, and it will be seen and felt that republicanism is not a mere sentiment; that human rights are indissolubly linked with human responsibilities; that freedom is not a glittering bauble which constitutions can confer, but a prize that is to be won and kept in the presence of active and ever-watchful foes.

And, in the light of subsequent events, is there reason to doubt that there was a higher than any human agency at work in the defeat of Mr. Clay and the success of the annexation plot, then deemed so mysterious and unfortunate? As it is the general conviction, that, in 1861, the nation was not prepared for victory on the battle-field of Bull Run, then wisely and fortunately withheld, may it not be believed that, in essentially the same conflict and for essentially the same reasons, it was not prepared for triumph in 1844? The success of the Slave Power then may now be looked upon not only as a means

of stimulating its grasping purposes and its vaulting ambition till it o'erleaped itself and rushed to its own overthrow, but as a necessary step in that march of events which has so rapidly and wonderfully opened the continent to the forces of a fresher energy and a higher civilization. "God in history," to the American and Christian patriot thus instructed, should therefore be a perpetual inspiration in the darkest hour, a perennial source of faith and hope, of consolation and courage.





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